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CREATIVE CHRISTIANITY

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CREATIVE CHRISTIANITY

A STUDY OF THE GENIUS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

BY

GEORGE CROSS

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TO MY CHILDREN

FOREWORD

DURING Easter Week of this year it was my privilege to deliver the Nathaniel W. Taylor Lectures at the Convocation of the Divinity School of Yale University. I wish hereby to express my thanks to the authorities of the University for the opportunity of setting forth some of my personal views before audiences of an extraordinary character and to my hearers for the patient and sympathetic manner in which they listened to my words. The lectures are here offered to the reading public in the form in which they were originally delivered, except for a slight expansion at a few points. The temptation to extend considerably the discussion of some of the subjects mentioned was very great, but such a course would have necessitated the recasting of the entire work and the substitution of an elaborate exposition of the theme for the merely suggestive treatment that is more natural in the case of lectures. Perchance I may be able at some future time to offer a more exhaustive discussion of important topics only touched upon at this time.

It is proper, perhaps, that this foreword should mention some reasons for the designation of my theme: "Creative Christianity." While it is hoped that the lectures themselves make these plain, it may

be added here that the title was chosen because of the fitness of the descriptive term *creative* to set forth a distinguishing quality of the faith which Jesus Christ has given to the world. From its beginnings this faith has had its home in the hearts of the common people, its power in any land or age in which it has made a place for itself has always been in direct proportion to the strength of its hold on the people whose hands are hard with toil and whose minds are full of care, and the most effective means of its dissemination have always been found in the natural associations of the people with one another. That it should be the faith of the most intelligent, independent and enterprising nations of the world in our day is what one might expect when he discerns its genius. For it tends invariably to freedom and spontaneity of action and expression wherever it is found. Its progress among any people is marked by the lessening of external direction and control and the growth of inner confidence and self-affirmation. Not fixity of form but continuity of development mark its presence and tell its secret. Like a tree of life it has the self-perpetuating power of an inner vital principle and from time to time it sheds its temporary forms, as a tree sheds its leaves, to provide for its own larger self-unfolding.

Christianity is a historical faith. This is much more than to say that it is united both in its origin and its continuance to definite concrete fact rather

than mere speculation, much more than to say that it persists through successive periods of time by means of the actual tangible forces that come into action in the life of humanity. It is also to say that its course is not truly separable from the action of the complex of forces that make up the career of any people who receive it, but it lives in their life. The story of Christianity is just the life-story of the people who are Christians. It is not a something in itself that may be attached to the personal life from without and, at will, detached again. It is in course of change constantly just as the life of humanity is always changing. The Christianity of today in any land is more than the Christianity of yesterday, just as the civil and social life of any people is more than it was yesterday.

The organizing genius of the Christian faith manifests itself in the reshaping of the forms of conduct or morality, the political affairs or civil constitution, the traditional theories of life or popular philosophy, and the manifestation of the spirit of reverence or worship current among any people. The faith becomes institutionalized in this way. It also becomes institutionalized in the churches which seek to be a direct embodiment of the Christian faith. These have their own forms of government, doctrine and worship, which commonly come to be viewed as essential to the faith itself. But there comes a time when these regulative provisions operate in the direction of restraining the freedom and initiative of the

believers whose spiritual good was intended originally to be served by them. As a progressive people outgrows these "essential" forms their continued imposition becomes a tyranny or oppression that must be resisted and thrown off, if faith is still to continue. That which seemed at one time indispensable to the religious life of the people has to be set aside in the interest of that very life, and other forms more truly representative of their higher faith and more adequate to the fulfillment of its aims must take their place. This is, in substance, what occurred in the Protestant Reformation when national churches took the place of the imperial Roman Church, and again when the free churches arose in response to the larger life that came to many of those who had had their spiritual home in the national churches. In the creativity of the Christian faith lies its power to avert the danger of stagnation and death.

It is not to be successfully disputed that we are at the present day in the midst of a powerful movement, nurtured by a variety of spiritual tendencies current among intelligent people, looking to the remaking of the forms in which our Protestantism has traditionally expressed its inner life. Ecclesiastical and doctrinal reconstruction are particularly imperative if the multitudes of educated young people issuing from our schools and colleges are to find a congenial home in our Christian churches. Owing to the character of the training to which they have

been subject all the way from the kindergarten to the university graduate school, the native cast of mind in which their religious life is to receive its moulding is so vastly different from that in which we and our fathers approached religious questions that, cost what it may to our feelings, we must make up our mind that their interpretation of the Christian faith, as of life in general, will be very different from that which was given to us by the fathers. The possibility of winning and holding these young people for the Christian faith depends very much on the frankness and courage with which those of us who are familiar and sympathetic with their training and perceive clearly the character of the questions they must face shortly, make up our minds to tell the whole truth, as we see it, plainly and kindly, leaving the outcome to the God of truth. For, be it remembered, these young people are to be the guides of the great masses of humanity in many lands in the days that are now coming so swiftly upon us, when all the peoples of the earth will mingle and seek a common leadership.

Two of the principal impediments to this higher and purer faith I must mention. One of these is the ancient Catholic inheritance of sacramentalism and the other is the early Protestant inheritance of legalism. These are often associated. Both tend to obscure the inwardness, directness and freedom of the soul's communion with its God and both produce the fruit of a morally sterile formalism and a

bitter intolerance. Both must be firmly repudiated in the interest of a pure and puissant faith that is to be the faith of mankind.

Happy are those teachers of youth who see in the enquiring minds of the boys and girls who throng our places of learning the promise of a Christian faith higher than that which our fathers gave to us and destined to succeed in winning the allegiance of multitudes whom our faith failed to win! Tennyson's words in "Locksley Hall" here come to mind:

"Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.
Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.
Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun;
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the sun—
O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set,
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet."

GEORGE CROSS.

Rochester, New York,
June 21, 1921.

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CREATIVE CHRISTIANITY

CREATIVE CHRISTIANITY;

A Study of the Genius of the Christian Faith.

CHAPTER I.

LECTURE I. THE METHOD OF THE STUDY.

Brethren of the Christian Ministry and Friends:

IN the series of addresses which it is to be my privilege to bring to you this Easter Week I am to ask you to embark with me on a study of the genius of the Christian faith. To everyone who seeks to hold this faith intelligently and to communicate it to the minds and consciences of others this task of ours must present itself as permanently imperative, and the present juncture in human affairs makes the time particularly opportune. For the work of reconstituting the essential order of human life, now pressing so hard on the human power of initiative on a vast scale among many peoples, is bound to produce a profound effect on the religious life of men everywhere and particularly where their religion has such ecumenical relations as ours. Some of the most noteworthy influences at work in this direction may be indicated at the outset.

The great war which broke in upon the peace of mankind less than seven years ago seems to have precipitated upon the world a cataclysm of unparalleled magnitude. It was not alone the desolation of the lands where the war was waged or the destruction of the accumulated wealth of the peoples, not alone the hugeness of the forces engaged in battle or even the wastage of human life—appalling though it was—that made the cataclysm so terrible to think upon. Nor was it that thrones crumbled, governments and empires were crushed or rent in sunder; that economic systems were thrown into confusion and social bonds were disrupted; that customs and maxims that had long stood sentinel to guard humanity against the power of unrestrained passion lost their authority—though the extent to which this occurred has filled our minds at times with bewilderment and our hearts with foreboding.

More trying than all this can be to the souls of men is the disillusionment of the hopes of the millions of people who have borne the Christian name. Prior to the war the old pessimistic spirit that formerly prevailed among Christians when they looked worldward had mostly passed away and the spirit of optimism had came at last to prevail. The rapid spread of the Christian Gospel during the last hundred years, the forming of Christian communities in every land, the constituent relation which the Christian religion had come to

hold toward all the great forces of modern civilization, the penetration of literature and education, science and art with its avowed principles, the institution by Christians of enterprises for the amelioration of human conditions everywhere—all these were allied in inspiring men with the vision of the rapid coming of the kingdom of heaven on earth. Our eyes were mostly closed to the signs of approaching strife and our ears to the subterranean rumblings that told of preparations for war and we could not believe that, even if the spirit of the beast and the bandit should arouse itself again, it would prove mighty enough to bring our noble structure down in ruins, until the breakdown suddenly came.

One of the sights that were peculiarly distressing to true-hearted and simple-minded believers was the spectacle of nations professedly Christian ranging themselves on opposite sides in the conflict. Christian and non-Christian were thrown confusedly together, so that the struggle had not the appearance of a war of religions. Moreover, the outbreak of savagery in many quarters and the ill-success in coping with it seemed to indicate that the motives which we commonly associate with the Christian name had a far lighter hold on the hearts of men than the prevalence of Christian forms and organizations seemed to indicate. Consequently, many intelligent people have been found in all seriousness asking the question, Has Christianity failed?

It will not do to take this question lightly or minimize the difficulty of answering it. We may not regard it as a mere reaction consequent upon an unusual strain. Nor will it do to seek to evade the issue by replying, "Christianity has not been tried," and seek to back up the evasion by quoting some single utterance of scripture that sets forth a principle of the Christian life which no man absolutely fulfills. If Christianity has a history—as it assuredly has—then it is certain that Christianity has been tried these nearly nineteen hundred years. It must be frankly confessed that the Christianity of the most recent past did fail at the very point at which multitudes of us had hoped its power would prevail, that is, it failed to prevent the most hideous war in history. We do not forget the magnificent display of heroism and self-sacrifice by which the life—and death—of multitudes of those on whose shoulders the responsibility of rescuing humanity from an unspeakable calamity was glorified. And yet, notwithstanding it all, it is pretty evident that people generally do not feel as sure as once they felt that the Christian religion has brought human control over material forces sufficiently under the power of moral force to assure us that materialism is not now threatening to crush the power of the higher life.

It may be that other people will seek relief from the pressure of the question by reviving a conception of Christianity that, we supposed, Protestantism

had outlived. It will be claimed, perchance, that the association or alliance of Christianity with community action, especially of a secular kind, is unnatural and unnecessary, that it was never intended to become integral to civilization because its home and its aims are found in another world, the world above. "It has not failed," they will say, "because it has brought to all who receive it an assurance of attaining to that home. Its original intent is being constantly fulfilled." Undoubtedly much scripture can be quoted as looking in that direction. We shall take further cognizance of this contention at a later stage of our study.

Others, again, somewhat likeminded with these, will seek to turn aside any implication of Christian failure by narrowing the issue to a single point. Such a saying as "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," may be quoted to remind us that no man who has met the condition here laid down for happiness will say that Christianity has failed to bring him the joy and strength he sought. Such words as these are doubtless of great significance and we thankfully acknowledge the comforting asurance that the Christian Gospel, as expressed in these words, has not failed to bring consolation and strength to multitudes whose minds have been profoundly exercised over international questions or other ecumenical problems. But, at the same time, it must be plain that to one who has taken the world of humanity into his heart and who views the strug-

gles of great communities of men with one another and the upheavals that disrupt the ancient bonds of society as significant of the effort of the spirit that is at work in our race to bring the world to a better state, the question keeps coming home, "Why has not Christianity made this purity of heart a more common possession and a greater force in the world?" It seems to me pretty plain that all such must feel that the prevailing conditions at the present time call for a reconsideration of the whole aim and effective power of the Christian faith.

In addition to the facts I have mentioned there are many concurrent influences now bidding us reconsider the meaning of our Christian traditions. Some of these influences are not very familiar to the multitudes whose hands are too busy with toil or whose minds are too much occupied with the simple issues of everyday affairs to make it possible for them to become acquainted with the ways of the schools or the interests that affect most deeply the mind of the professional student. And yet the problems of the trained thinker have a way of percolating through to the thoughts of the more serious-minded among the toiling masses of men. These discover that the problems of the thinker are truly their problems too. So that, for their sake also, even apart from the issues raised by the war, a revision of the whole inherited exposition of the Christian faith is becoming daily a more pressing necessity. And this, I am sure, we shall see, is not to be regretted as if it were

a mark of declining faith. It is rather, I trust, an indication that our faith is coming to have for us a more vital relation to the whole of life than it had for our fathers, It is not necessary in this place to do more than make a bare mention of the principal concurrent influences I have in mind.

Firstly, then, there are the accepted methods and results of modern scientific research. The persistent interrogation of nature, the collating and organizing of her answers, the inductions and inferences drawn therefrom, with a seemingly pitiless disregard of the personal longings of the investigator or of any one else, have annulled the ancient Christian representations of this world, the worlds above and the worlds below, so that they have ceased to appear as a statement of discovered or revealed facts, and have become to us a series of merely symbolic representations of the movements of the inner spirit. This has forced an abandonment of the cosmography which is so closely interwoven with the biblical and long current Christian view of the relation which the world in which we now live bears to another world to which men go when they die that, to many persons, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to replace the ancient view with the modern except at the cost of undermining popular confidence in the truth of the faith that found at one time this ancient cosmography so congenial. Let us remember that the common school children are being trained in the new mode of conceiving the world and that they will

carry it with them through every phase of their lives.

Secondly, there is the fundamental scientific and philosophic contention that that there can be no genuine knowledge of this universe in which we must live our life, except on the presupposition of the immanency, permanency and integrated unity of the forces and laws of the universe. This is now becoming a common maxim of the schools. In consequence, every one so trained must place a note of interrogation after all the biblical accounts of miracles. Now, when it is remembered that one of the great churches of Christendom relies on these accounts of miracles and the continuation of such miracles as the basis of its claims and almost the whole of the rest of Christendom from ancient times down almost, if not entirely, to our own time have believed that the great traditional doctrines of the faith repose on the reality of these miraculous events, the spiritual situation created thereby must seem fairly revolutionary. To many people the miracles have become a source of distress and not of consolation. In this way it has been brought about that the whole question of the reality and meaning of the supernatural must be faced anew.

Thirdly, we have to reckon with the rise and the growing influence of the modern science of history. Its conscience for facts is associated with a pitiless throwing into the discard of all the most beautiful, as well as the most repulsive, representations of

events whose origin lies in the mere fancy or the native love of the dramatic. It is governed by the determination to discover, if possible, the meaning of human life by discerning the forces that operate immanently within it rather than trace its changes to interference from without. Naturally enough, it has brought into question the trustworthiness of many of those accounts which have seemed to multitudes of Christians indispensable to the assurance of the faith. In this way the origin of our faith and the relation particularly of Jesus Christ and the events of his life to it are brought once more under critical review. These difficulties must be met squarely.

Fourthly, since the days of John Locke scientific interest has been directed increasingly to the field of the inner life of men. In due time it has led to an examination of the nature and meaning of religion as a form of psychic action or experience. From an interest in the manner in which a religion was *given* to men our minds have been turned to the manner in which it *rises* in the human heart. Consequently, there has been a transfer of emphasis from its outer forms, its doctrines and its means of propagation to its inner character and its inherent worth to the natural life of men. In this way the inner affinity of Christianity with other faiths, as well as its distinction from them, has been set before our minds as of more significance than the manner in which it was ushered into the world. The modern Christian missionary movement, instead of opposing

this tendency, has confirmed it. Evidently, then, today the interpreter of the Christian faith will concern himself more deeply with the manner in which the faith lives in his own soul and the souls of other men than with the forms in which it has been professedly set forth. He will view it in its inner relation to the whole of the processes of the mind in which it dwells rather than as something superadded to the life of men from without.

It is quite an inadequate estimate of the seriousness of the spiritual situation now confronting us to say that there must be a restatement of the Christian faith in terms of the thought of the present day. That indeed must be done, but much more. We must rediscover it, so to say, by living through its history afresh. It must not be assumed that there are available for our use any *fixed* standard tests for the final determination of what is truly Christian as distinct from that which claims to be Christian. When we turn to the liturgies, the creeds, the organizations and the personal and social customs which have been commonly taken as representative of the Christian faith we can find no fixed external standard by which we may decide how far they are Christian. They are important as showing some of the ways in which our religion came to expression in the past. These are not necessarily the most significant. Perchance we shall discover that the standard is to be found in the future rather than in the past. Perchance we shall see that that which is most truly

Christian is yet to be. It may be that its judgment day, like that which awaits each of us, is still to come.

I have spoken of crises in Christian history. These are always significant because they bring to light the character of the forces which have long been at work but whose presence was somewhat hidden. There are three that stand out pre-eminently:—The first of these occurred when the Christian Gospel passed out from the limitations to which it was subjected in the Jewish community into the great Graeco-Oriental world and came under the necessity of adaptation to the spiritual conditions prevalent in it. The second occurred when it passed the boundaries of that world westward and was compelled to seek adjustment to the needs of the half-civilized but energetic peoples of western Europe. And the third great crisis occurred when it was confronted with the perplexing complex of influences that made the Protestant Revolution. In the first of these instances the danger lest the youthful faith be dissipated in the medley of traditions, customs, superstitions, myths, allegories and cosmic speculations that flooded the lands of the eastern Mediterranean, was met by the transformation of the original Gospel into a body of mysteries, or sacraments, as the indispensable media of the impartation of the divine life, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, the theoretical basis of these mysteries was laid in the creation of the Nicene Creed

with its doctrine of three persons in one divine essence and of two natures in the one divine person, Jesus Christ. The second crisis was met by the elaboration of a perfected system of sacraments intended to minister to all the various spiritual needs of men, the perfection of a priestly order to whose hands the sacraments were committed, and the preparation of a system of rules for the regulation of the conduct of the individual and of a body of doctrines to satisfy his mind. In other words, the penitential system and the scholastic theology grew out of the second crisis. And the third crisis issued in the institution of national churches to serve the interests of both state and church, in the simplification of the traditional ceremonial to meet the desire of the common man to experience immediate personal communion with God, in the intellectual interpretation of the Christian religion in "Confessions of Faith," and in the erection of a final and sufficient standard of faith and practice in the Bible.

Our present interest in these three achievements lies in certain assumptions common to them all. They may be reduced to the three following: First: that with the coming of Jesus Christ into the world an original supernatural deposit was committed to men through a divine intervention in the natural and normal course of things in this world. To the Catholic, this supernatural deposit consists of a positive heavenly grace communicated through

certain tangible or visible facts and forms, known as "mysteries" to the Greeks and "sacraments" to the Romans. To the Protestant the supernatural deposit is of "truth" or doctrines communicated to the spirit of man directly by God himself (but, to the Catholic, doctrines have a sacramental character—they are "mysteries," not necessarily to be understood but obediently accepted). Second: the bestowment of this deposit is inseparably connected with a series of facts, similarly of a supernatural order, the knowledge of which facts is preserved in the Christian tradition. With the Catholic, these supernatural facts continue to occur as an abiding testimony to the presence of sacramental power among men, but, with the Protestant these supernatural occurrences are no longer necessary, since the truth they attest is given once and forever. Third: these authoritative traditions are given in the canonical Scriptures (say the Protestants) or in the pronouncements of an official priestly order or in both (say the Catholics). The detailed development of these capital assumptions as they appear in the variant Catholic and Protestant theories need not detain us further. It is sufficient to have pointed out that the two chief divisions of Christendom hold these fundamental tenets in common.

It is scarcely necessary to point out that all three of these assumptions stand or fall together. The first in order is the first in importance according to the traditional interpretation. If it be not granted, the

special interest in the other two falls away. All three have come increasingly under the criticism of Christian men of late. It is doubted whether any absolute external authority in matters of faith has been provided or is needed. Similarly, it is doubted whether the series of events recorded as occurring at the beginning of the Christian faith or at any stage of its progress are to be considered as supernatural in the sense commonly intended hitherto by that term. Similarly also, the question whether there was an original supernatural (i. e., in the sense just spoken of) deposit and, if so, what it was, is now open to perfectly free discussion without prejudice to the Christian character of him who raises the question. With the gradual disappearance of sacramentalism this assumption is coming to be seen as unnecessary and even as an obstacle to the progress of the Christian faith and to the permanency of its hold on the hearts of intelligent men. The history of Christian doctrine and practice has made it clear that both the formulations of Christian dogmas and confessions of faith and the establishment of sacraments were called forth by special circumstances and were meant to serve special purposes that no longer obtain among multitudes of Christian people. So much so is this the case that it is no longer necessary in such an assembly as this to argue the question in general. I may add that I do not think that the situation, as I have tried to describe it, is regrettable. So far from being significant of a spiritual decline or a

loss of confidence in the divine worth and permanency of the Christian faith, it seems to be indicative of a growing clearness of the consciousness of our relation to God and an immediacy of the assurance of his favor that have led inevitably to the discarding of those artificial supports, as a sound man throws away the crutches which he found at one time necessary.

There is, however, a certain phase of the view that a final and sufficient authority for faith can be found in an objective deposit in the past that must engage our attention for a few moments because of the prominence given to it in some quarters at the present time. I refer to the tendency to test all that is professedly Christian by falling back upon the certified teachings of Jesus.

Accompanying the growing dissatisfaction with the creeds of the churches as standards of Christian faith and with the view that the Bible in its entirety constitutes the final authority, there has come a regressive search for the Christian originals. One of the results of this historical investigation is the certainty that the authors of the New Testament writings were not consciously presenting themselves before the world as having been specially commissioned to prescribe for their fellowmen for all time to come the doctrines to be believed as the condition of salvation. It has also become plain that if they had made in any instance a claim of this sort it must now be subjected to those tests which are ordinarily applied to all professions of special privilege

or power. That has been pretty generally granted in our day. But with the disappearance of "apostolic authority" in the current sense there has come a custom of falling back upon what is designated "the teachings of Jesus" as the ground-work of Christianity, all other teachings professedly Christian, whether in the Bible or out of it, being subjected to the test of agreement with his. This view represents, I say, the final remnant of the assumption that there was an original deposit definitely given to men in the creation of the Christian faith and that this must be preserved in its purity and integrity if the faith itself is to be preserved. We need not stay even a moment at this point to develop the argument that this is, after all, a legalistic interpretation of Christianity or to show its defects on that account. But we do wish to point out that this attitude toward our problem raises two important questions. Firstly: do the traditional teachings of Jesus furnish an adequate basis for the Christian faith as it has been seen in actual operation in history? Secondly: can it be affirmed with confidence that we really possess the teachings of Jesus in any such form that they can be called specifically his, as distinguished or distinguishable from the views held by his followers concerning him and his teachings? An adequate reply to the first of these questions must await a fuller treatment of the entire theme of these lectures but a preliminary statement may be made at the present moment.

In the first place, then, it is quite debatable whether an orderly collection and arrangement of the Master's teachings, supposing it could be made with certainty, would truly represent to us what he taught. It is possible that such a presentation of his teachings might disclose logical contradictions or, at least, disharmonies. For there is no convincing evidence that the Master possessed or even sought to frame a connected and ordered body of thought or doctrines after the manner of the philosopher or professed theologian. It is extremely unlikely, indeed, that this was the case. The narratives and sayings found in the first three of our canonical Gospels unite in conveying the impression that Jesus' teachings were of the occasionalist type. To a considerable degree the Gospel of John conveys the same impression. His discourse was not in the ordered form characteristic of the professional preacher. The very attempts made by the evangelists to present here or there an ordered discourse disclose the work on their part of piecing together detached utterances. His utterances consisted mostly of stories, similes, ejaculations, moral injunctions and warnings, words of consolation, pity and encouragement to the distressed, religious exhortations, prayers, meditations and personal conversations often directed in their course by the queries or responses of his hearers. He was an itinerant oriental teacher. Both his public utterances and his private conversations sprang commonly out of peculiar circumstances and in not

a few instances the time, place and reason for his speaking as he did have been lost to view. So that it is quite likely to turn out that the orderly and systematic arrangement of the so-called teachings of Jesus might issue in giving to them a meaning which they did not have and could not have when they were first uttered. It is even possible—and we can say it with the very deepest reverence for him in our hearts—that if all the teachings of Jesus were brought together in the exact form in which he gave them there might be found among them some that would not commend themselves as fixed and final to the faith of the most intelligent and devout Christians of the present day. Men cannot be called upon to believe things simply because of the name that is attached to them but they only believe truly when that which comes to them from without is at the same time the fruitage of their most prolonged and profoundest experiences. In this way there always arises a subjective evaluation of all that is offered to our faith and in this way also it becomes impossible to place the whole of what is offered upon a common level or to regard every part as equally vital. In the end it will be found that what is to be placed at the centre and what at the periphery of the teaching of Jesus is determined for each of us by the relative depths of their inwardness to our own hearts' life.

In the second place—to recall a point made a moment ago—the true significance and value of what

Jesus said are never to be discovered simply by putting his teachings by themselves. Not only do identical words spoken under different circumstances take on a different meaning but they take on a different meaning on the lips of different speakers especially when the subject is one in which the deepest emotional, intellectual and moral interests are at stake. The words of no man are to be understood apart from an insight into his character. We must see the speaker either actually or through the enlightened imagination if we are to know truly what he means. This is particularly true of one whose whole personality, and not merely his words, impressed itself mightily on men and constituted the decisive factor in the crisis of their lives. Consequently, when we study the words of Jesus we must fuse them with his deeds and experiences as these are reflected upon us from the minds of the men to whom we owe the earliest portrait of him. This brings us to our second question.

Do we really possess the teachings of Jesus in such definite form and with such correctness of representation that they can be called specifically his? For a satisfactory answer to this question we are dependent on the work of the higher criticism. The time at our disposal forbids anything beyond a summary of the outcome of the immense labors of this branch of historical science in its relation to our problem, the positions of different critics and the details of their findings being necessarily passed by.

We turn first to the Gospel of John. This work is the product of long sustained and profound reflection on the meaning and worth of the career of Jesus. The writer has reached a highly developed interpretation of it and plainly desires to set this forth in his evangel. In comparison with the other Gospels, it is emphatically a presentation of the discourses of Jesus. But narrative and discourse are brought together in such a way, for the most part, that the events selected furnish a suitable occasion for the pronouncement of the messages. Just how far the character and the content of the narratives were determined in accordance with the author's purpose in the discourses it may not be possible for any one to decide but it was very probably so to a large extent. It is quite in keeping with the opening words of this Gospel and the tone that pervades it throughout to say that it is the discourses that supply the motive for the delineation of the happenings and not the happenings that supply the best clue to the character of the discourses. The latter also reflect mostly a type of thinking very different in many of their features from that which prevails in the other Gospels. Then, too, the author writes with the distinctly asserted aim of establishing in the minds of his readers a thesis which he states, and the opening words of his Gospel indicate that a philosophical interpretation of Jesus' career has taken possession of his mind. Naturally, therefore, the discourses are to be taken as setting forth a certain construction

of the *meaning* of Jesus' words and deeds expressed in the author's manner of thought and speech. Whether or no there is at any place in this Gospel an exact reproduction of Jesus' sayings it is impossible to say, but the discourses certainly express the author's view of what Jesus meant in the whole sweep of his life's purpose. The fourth Gospel is an interpretation of Jesus by an author who lived two generations later and the interpretation reflects the deep and broad experiences through which he and other Christians had passed in the interval. Such an experience as theirs must have brought an enrichment of meaning to all that they had learned of Jesus.

The verdict we have reached respecting the Gospel of John leads to a similar verdict respecting the other Gospels, though many critics are loth to part with the inherited belief that the sayings of Jesus reported in them are his own peculiarly and that the acts described really occurred in the time and manner presented to us. We cannot go into the question of certain hypothetical documents which are supposed to underlie these Gospels. The hypothesis of an original Markan document underlying our present Mark and source of the narratives in Matthew and Luke paralleling our Mark, the hypothesis of an unknown document or documents which are the common source of the parallel discourses in these Gospels, as well as several hypotheses respecting the origin of portions peculiar to a single

work, may very well be true. The questions hereby raised are all of much interest, but for our present purposes it seems to matter little how many of them are verifiable so long as we remember that the ultimate originals are not documents at all but stories and teachings circulated by oral transmission from one person to another, one community to another and one generation to another, supported and vivified by the florid imagination and native dramatic power of the oriental mind undisciplined and untamed by the severe rules of an unemotional logic. It is well to remember too that the Gospels are the deposit of the experiences of more than one generation of Christians of this type, whose struggles to maintain and propagate their faith amid poverty, persecution and conflict must inevitably have been reflected in the recitals that finally took the form in which we have them now preserved.

It also matters little, perhaps, if we do not know whose hands put our Gospels into their present form, but their reasons for doing so are of great account. For one thing, the reader is impressed with their evident sincerity. When they affirm that Jesus did or said thus and so, they believe that they are speaking truth, though they think of truth, not in our modern matter-of-external-fact, logical or mathematical way of viewing it, but according to the worthfulness of the effects the things that were done had upon themselves and would have, so they hoped, on others. Not as we might feel obliged to do,

have they detached themselves from the narratives nor are they quoting in cold scientific spirit the stories and sayings that had been handed down, but everywhere they are giving us their own hearts' convictions of what Jesus was to them and would be to the world. Any one who is familiar with the freedom which the oriental uses in his weaving together of the strands of a story that has been given to him or in his composition of a message which he is to transmit will appreciate this consideration. It need not surprise us, therefore, if we discover that their reports of the sayings of Jesus represent not so certainly the words he actually used as they do their belief as to what he must have said. To a degree we all have been feeling that it is so with these writings and because of the tenderness and the grandeur of the faith that is expressed in them we have had a feeling of shrinking, with reason, from a treatment of them that would tend to sacrifice their religious worth to the strict historicity or non-historicity of their accounts from the *de facto* point of view.

When the question of the historicity of the Gospels is *now* raised among us it is meant to ask whether certain purported events of those days, which are quite unparalleled in our times and would certainly not be accepted as plain accounts of real occurrences by many intelligent people if the events were represented as contemporary with our own times, can be accepted as accounts of matters of fact of that time

or of any time. Here is the plain question: Can we believe, as these writings seem to affirm, that the natural order and connection of events which are universally accepted among educated people of our day were non-existent in those days or that this system, if it did exist in those days, was broken into from without for a special purpose, even if that purpose was the highest conceivable? The traditional apologetical answer to this latter question has been in the affirmative, but the answer by the scientifically trained college man of today is as distinctly in the negative. It will be said also by him that in the examination of the question it is essential that the characteristic habits of thought and speech of those days be kept in mind and that, through disrobing the narratives of the drapery thrown around them by the popular imagination, we may hope to find the substratum of plain fact underlying. Can this be done with certainty?

Permit me to illustrate this point by introducing an account recently given me by a lady medical missionary in India of an event in her ministry of healing. The story is here given in her own words as far as I can recall them:—"In the course of my professional work I was called to attend to a little sick boy in one of the jungle villages. The moment I saw him I knew that I had a serious brain case on my hands. For his body had become rigid and as he lay on his back it described a curve, so that he rested on his heels and the back of his head.

However, I went to work to do the best I could under the circumstances, and had success. Before very long the little laddie was fairly well again. A short time afterwards I heard his mother telling the story of his recovery to a group of women sitting round her, and this is the way the story ran: 'My boy was dead for three days. The healing woman came and laid her hands upon him and, behold! he lived.' " Here we have the characteristic story-telling of the oriental mind, innocent of our methods of training. We observe its native dramatic power here at work unhindered. It delights in the marvellous, the mysterious, the miraculous. Its narratives are a series of pictures colored with the rich imagery so conveniently at hand. The popular oriental mind revels in this, but it knows little and cares less for the close concatenation of causes and effects which seems so important to us.

Let us suppose that, instead of a production of the free imagination of the Indian woman's untrained mind, we had before us the physician's own expert report of the case given to an assembly of medical men. Then we should find the story presented from the standpoint of the profession. It would be an exact and accurate account in technical terms of what actually occurred, *as the physician saw it.* The attention of the hearer would be attracted to those features of the case which seemed the most significant from the point of view of medical science. To medical men this account would be entirely

natural and the physician's language would interest them only in so far as it enabled them to visualize the processes that marked the achievement of the healing art. Yet how few of us who are untrained in the technique of medical science could gather from the narrative an intelligent view of what really occurred! Or suppose, again, that, instead of the Indian woman's semi-poetical representation of the occurrence or the physician's professional statement, we had before us the narrative of an eye-witness of the physician's work who had never come under professional instruction in this field but was possessed of the intelligence of the ordinary modern man amongst us. Then we should have still another type of narrative. It would be such as the historian could make use of as a correct statement of matter-of-fact, though it might furnish only a very partial explanation of what occurred, so that the use to be made of it would be very limited.

It is plain that the manner in which the historian could make use of these narratives would depend a good deal on the particular aim of his investigation. If it were to write an account of the progress of medical science and practice in its treatment of affections of the brain tissue, he would employ the materials of the physician's recital exclusively. If his aim were to set before his readers the quality of the service the missionaries are rendering to suffering humanity in those regions where disease and pain are very prevalent and medical care difficult to

obtain, he would depend mainly on the matter-of-fact statement of our non-professional man of average intelligence, a man who has as little of the love of the mysterious and supernatural as he has of technical medical knowledge. But if, instead of either of these, his purpose were to acquaint himself and others with the character and power of the spiritual impact of the Christian spirit upon the minds of India's jungle dwellers, the woman's dramatic story would be material to his purpose. She had access to no other means of representing the marvel. Her statement is valuable material for the historian because it discloses in a way in which neither of the others can, the working of the Christian spirit upon the minds of people of that kind. It may be that her story is the most important of the three because it brings us face to face with the facts which are the most significant of all to us. Her story is to us the dramatization of a spiritual process and it touches our sympathies in a manner in which, perhaps, the others could not.

Where, then, do the stories of Jesus' words and doings belong? In what particular lies their chief interest for us? Unhesitatingly we decide, not to the first of the three mentioned. Precise scientific knowledge is utterly lacking. Do they belong, then, to the second class? In a minor degree only. The connectedness which we look for between the parts of a modern story is found only in certain places in the narratives. While the writers undoubtedly do

attempt to give information concerning the origin of their faith, it is not usually traced to the normal working of forces operative in human life generally, as we perceive them, but to forces of a different order. While we, with our training in historical perspective and method would fain make out of the stories an account of the life of Jesus it is quite certain that this is not the aim of these narratives. The Gospels and narrative elements found elsewhere in the New Testament belong distinctly to the third class. Everywhere the characteristic oriental mind, untouched by the methods of our schools, is at work dramatizing everything, setting forth with all the power of religious emotion the coming in upon the lives of men of a miraculous intervention of unseen powers of the world above and the world below. What the Gospels and other New Testament writings disclose to us is the impression which the career of Jesus made upon the minds of men at the time of the writing and shortly before.

If, now, the question is asked, "What was it that really happened as the result of which these writings appeared?" we must say that if it is meant hereby to ask, "How many of the deeds and words ascribed to Jesus occurred just as they are represented as having occurred?" we must say that while the question is legitimate and even inevitable, the prospect of getting a satisfactory answer to it by the methods of historical investigation is very poor. If one attempts to give a definite answer it is more likely

to disclose his presuppositions than it is to release the external facts reported by eye-witnesses. Not only so, but even if we could settle upon a reliable record of the observable external facts of which New Testament records are a representation, it is by no means certain that much would be gained thereby for our religious purposes. For the ultimate interest we, as religious people, have in these accounts, lies in the narrator's representative state of mind which is disclosed in the accounts. The truly important event, that which gives the New Testament its tremendous hold upon us, is the production of the state of mind which appears in the narratives and the other writings and which has been communicated with growing power to succeeding generations of people. The external events happened a long time ago and will never happen again. They are forever past. But Christianity is surely more than a memory. The state of mind into which these early Christians came is not a thing of the past. The spiritual impact of it has persisted with ever expanding power down to our times and seems destined to continue while the world shall last. The creative force of the faith that utters itself in the New Testament is what we are thinking of at this point and our aim is to understand the meaning and permanent character of the spiritual forces that came into action in the life of believers at the time.

When this point in our reflection on the genius of the Christian faith is reached, it becomes evident

that we are confronted at the outset with the demand that we undertake a critical estimate of the *worth* of of what is found in the New Testament. It also becomes evident that this estimate cannot be intelligently and adequately arrived at until the utterances of religious faith found in the New Testament have been placed in an unbroken chain of continuity with the manifold expressions of religious faith found throughout the entire Christian era to the present time. As students we can avail ourselves of no "short cut" to the discovery of the worth of Christian faith at any period in the long story of its progress. If we would really come to know broadly and deeply what it was that came to make its home in human hearts when Jesus came to the world we must live in our own souls through the successive stages of the life of the Christian faith and let each stamp its character on our sympathetic mind.

We come here, at last, to our question: What is it that comes to the spirits of men in the Christian religion? What is it the Christian religion brings to pass in the life of humanity as its own achievement? Of what is Christianity creative in the world? What is its genius?

A reply may be made to this question, of course, by pointing to the creeds and confessions of faith or the systems of doctrine or belief that have been formulated as the result of the impact of the Christian faith on the minds of men. Or we may be directed to the liturgies of the churches or its organ-

ized activity as exhibiting its productivity in the realm of emotion or will. But, even so, it is necessary in respect to all these to determine in how far they are genuine products of the faith and the outcome of such a critical estimate is likely to be the fixing of an irreducible minimum of each of these as constituting the essence of Christianity. Our reply will take a different direction. We know nothing of an irreducible minimum in this area. We know of nothing that has remained or can remain unchanged from the inception of the Christian faith down to the present. To conceive the Christian's task as that of conserving something given once for all is to deprive it of its momentum and blot out its vision.

In accordance with what was said at an earlier point in this lecture we shall also hope to avoid any arbitrary determination of the issue, like that of selecting any one of the multitude of heart-searching and will-subduing utterances of the New Testament and making that cardinal to the whole discussion. Nor shall we depend on any differentiation of the teachings of Jesus from the teachings of his first followers, even if the two should not be identical, inasmuch as this distinction always turns out in the end more or less arbitrary and unsatisfactory. Nor, again, shall we make the integrated and organized content of the New Testament teachings—priceless spiritual heritage though it is—our final and perfect test of all that is professedly Christian. For

it may very well be that in the depth of spirituality experienced by the authors and in the period of time and range of human history covered by these writings there was insufficient opportunity for the ultimate purpose and highest motive power of the Christian faith to become clear. Nor, once again, can we be content to base our interpretation directly upon the creeds and confessions of faith that have appeared at times of spiritual crisis in the Christian movement. While these are indicative of the manner in which the genius of Christianity was unfolding itself they all bear the stamp of the peculiar situation the framers of those statements had to face and the intellectual, emotional and moral characteristics of the men who composed them, with all the limitations incident to their condition. Besides, it is quite uncertain that these formulations are the most significant thing Christians have done to exhibit their true faith. It may very well be that the life of the private Christian family, the social customs they have followed, the forms of government they have set up and the liturgies or other forms of worship in their churches are as significant as their doctrines.

In other words, the genius of the Christian faith is to be discovered through a study of the whole career of the Christian people in its great general characters. For, be it remembered that, while we speak abstractly of Christianity as if it were a something in itself, it is found nowhere but in Chris-

tians—not in a book or a ritual or an organization, but just in human persons. The story of the Christian religion is not at bottom a story of those things which more or less correctly, whether abstractly or concretely, are taken to represent it, but it is the story of the people who came long ago under the power of a great personality and continue in their loyalty to him. When we seek to designate the distinctive character of these people it is not necessary that we point to any positive addition that may be said to have been made to the native resources or capital of men. It may be that what we call the Christian religion is just the native inner power of the human spirit coming into action in a distinctive way. It may be that the coming of Jesus among men released hidden energies of their spirits and that their action is so constantly creative that, so to say, the Christianity of today will be less than true Christianity tomorrow.

There remains but one word more to say in this introductory lecture. I refer to the subjective (personal) factor which is indispensable in the interpretation of the Christian faith. All interpretation is at bottom a species of evaluation. The interpreter makes his approach, selects his material and places his emphasis according to his hitherto estimate of what is worthful. That estimate is no merely external, scientific appraisement but springs from the inmost experiences of personal good. This is not an arbitrary element in the solution of the problem,

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though it is subjective. If the experiences referred to were the individual's alone, then the danger of arbitrariness might be serious but this danger disappears progressively with the discovery of a community life of which they are the source or the product.

At this point we are reminded of the Roman Catholic contention that the power to make a true interpretation of the Christian faith lies solely and wholly within the Church. Over against the Protestant affirmation that every man has the power and the right to interpret the revealed will of God for himself stands the Catholic insistence that we are to be protected from the caprice and arbitrariness of the individual by the authoritative tradition preserved in its purity and integrity within the Church. Underneath this view of the matter is to be found a profound truth perverted, as we have so often found, in the interest of an ecclesiastical order. It must be acknowledged that the individual who has within himself, independently of others, the power to interpret the Christian religion is a hypothetical personality. In what minute degree, I wonder, has an illiterate Hottentot, who has never lived within the atmosphere of a Christian community the power to apprehend the meaning of the Christian faith? The great spiritual forces that have come into action in human life where this faith has had its home are nearly altogether alien to him. They have not entered into the texture of his life. He has not

had a communion with others in these things. The *whence* of his spiritual life is vastly other than the Christian. The New Testament with all its universalism of appeal would remain mostly a sealed book to him who had no contact with Christian personalities. I have chosen this extreme example in order to bring out the principle. How differently equipped is he who from his infancy inward has breathed the air of the Christian family, or the church, the community and the nation in which Christian grace, mercy and peace have been the chief forces moulding the lives of the people! In thousands of ways of which at the best he is only dimly conscious these have wrought his spiritual constitution and made him the kind of man he is. The people to whom he owes this endowment were in their turn made what they are by the quality of Christian life to which they fell heirs. In other words, we owe the type of spirituality which we have to a spiritual inheritance from the past. Apart from this we could never have come to be what we are. Thus the power to interpret the faith, so far from being an endowment obtained *ab extra,* is just itself a gift imparted to us by the faith as it has lived in other persons and through them been transmitted to ourselves. Wherefore, the very interpretation I would now offer you has been constituted for me by the inward condition of the community of Christians, large or small, to whom I owe my very self.

And yet, the whole truth of the matter does not thereby come to light. For the interpretation which you or I may place upon the Christian faith reflects the faith only as it has been transfused by the fire of our personal selfhood. No man's personality is purely a product of the community's life. No more is it merely a duplicate of any other life that was ever lived. In that transfusion of the traditional Christianity that takes place in any one of us it is become somewhat other than it was before it became the centre of our soul's life. For there are within each of us endowments that are peculiarly our own. There is truly an "isolation" of personality from personality that grows increasingly "defined" as Tennyson puts it, with the years. This makes progress possible. Thus the Christian faith is construed within each of us somewhat differently from the way in which it ever was construed before we came. The faith of others, as it impinged upon our inward life awoke into action the energies of our souls and, by the action of these energies of ours in response, the faith itself became in each of us what it never would or could have been without us. In this way the Christian tradition is now in process of evolution. The Christianity of yesterday was creative of the Christianity of today but at the same time the Christianity of today is more and somewhat other than the Christianity of yesterday. For it recreates that which came from the past and makes it new.

Thus, then, we may say that the interpreter of

Christianity remakes it by his very act of interpretation and the Christianity which he passes on to others by his interpretation possesses a character different in degree from that which he received. The interpreter is always a prophet. He puts forth, as it were, a faith that is yet to be. Christianity is ceaselessly creative. It is ceaselessly in process of being created.

Accordingly, our task in these lectures is to point out the manner in which the inner life of the Christian people has fulfilled itself by constantly reconstructing the forces operative in it, as the evangel wins new converts and as the context of their lives calls forth spiritual activities of a new kind. We shall specify three most significant directions in which this creative action has moved. Firstly, we shall study Christianity as the progressive discovery of the perfect personality. Secondly, we shall observe it in action bringing into being the better world. Thirdly, we shall find in it the power to disclose the meaning of the cosmos, moulding the universe as an intellectual, aesthetic and volitional unity into the likeness of the spirit that dominates the lives of the Christian people.

CHAPTER II.

LECTURE II. THE DISCOVERY OF THE PERFECT PERSONALITY

THE use of the term *personality* in the designation of the subject of this lecture constitutes an invitation for each of us to participate in the stimulating discussions which a philosophical treatment of this idea has called forth in our times. That so much attention should now be given to the study of personality in circles of learning and in the literature of reflection is suggestive of the centre of interest in the minds of Protestant religious people. The limitations of our present task forbid an excursion into that attractive field, and the natural presumption on my part that you are all in possession of, at least, a working apprehension of the psychological and philosophical implications of the conception of personality renders an undertaking of the kind mentioned unnecessary here. However, I think that I may fitly make a few brief statements preliminary to our discussion.

In the life of every human being there arises sooner or later the power of being aware of one's

self as distinguishable from all things else and of affirming one's selfhood in the face of the whole assembly of facts which constitute our field of knowledge and action. At what point of time in the inner and outer life of a child the beginning of this action can be discovered neither memory nor the most careful psychical research enables us to determine, but when once the experience of self-awareness occurs it is never lost in the spiritual life of any normal human being. As this mysterious power progressively unfolds itself in life it seeks to appropriate the whole body of existence and relate it to itself as material for its self-action and to maintain its own dignity and worth in the face of all the forces that impinge upon it and threaten it with destruction.

It is not only this power of self-distinction from all things else that calls forth our wonder. We are equally impressed with its power to recognize other selves of its own order—in whatsoever manner it may be done. It discovers itself in discovering them and by living in and with them arrives at its own selfhood. Thus there appears the triangle of self-consciousness—the "I," the "thou" and the "he,"—each of them indispensable to the others. Personality is inseparable from this fellowship and in the perfection of this fellowship finds its own perfection.

The interest in personality is the highest interest of life, whether it be in the realm of theory or the realm of practice. The story of its self-fulfillment is the most thrilling that can be written, for all

others are tributary to it. The story of the progress of science and art, of industry and commerce, of the social and economic life becomes in its climax the story of the manner in which men come to themselves in this world, of the manner in which they stamp the qualities of their spirit upon everything they meet and of their successful assertion of supremacy over the whole world of objective fact. We feel that the theme of our discussion at this time introduces us to the very heart of human life.

It is fitting that an attempt to exhibit the genius of Christianity should begin at this point. Our exposition begins naturally with the books of the New Testament, since these are the earliest records we possess of our faith and since these writings concern themselves pre-eminently with the career and significance of that personality that has dominated the course of Christianity—Jesus Christ. In attempting to say anything at all about this theme I am assuming that the education which the young people are now receiving in the schools is of the most serious import and am proceeding on the assumption that the spiritual needs which this education has created in their hearts must be met squarely if they are to be the future apostles of our faith. It is these destined leaders of the people I have in mind in the present discussions.

Let us suppose that we had in our midst today a young man who, having passed through the intellectual training given in one of our colleges, was in

possession of the range of knowledge and highly disciplined habits of mind imparted by the prevailing methods of education in our higher institutions of learning, and who, while well acquainted with the mythology and legendary lore of oriental peoples generally, had never read the New Testament or known till this day that the narratives it contains existed. Let us picture to ourselves, I say, such a youth discovering accidentally a copy of the New Testament and proceding to read it through without assistance from any one who professed to be an interpreter of it. He would soon perceive that these writings, as I have just said, concern themselves principally with two tasks, namely, the story of the career of Jesus of Nazareth and an explanation of the meaning of his presence and place in the world. He would first proceed, I think, to evaluate these accounts in terms of his appreciation of truly historical facts and their place in the making of our present lives. We can surmise without much difficulty some of the thoughts this intellectually keen, heathen young man would be likely to have.

It is pretty certain that his attention would first be attracted to the extraordinary *occurrences* recorded and that he would detect resemblances between them and the extraordinary events associated in the minds of people with the beginnings of other faiths. Also, there can be little doubt that a reader with his mental tendencies would regard such accounts as the virgin birth of Jesus, the visions and dreams associated

with it, his feeding of thousands of people at a single time from a few barley cakes, his walking on the water of the lake to go aboard a boat and rejoin his disciples, his producing a calm in the midst of the storm by commanding the waves and winds to be quiet, his raising of the dead back to life by the utterance of a word—there can be little doubt, I say, in the minds of those who are familiar with the effect of thoroughly scientific training upon the minds of men in our day, that this hypothetical youth would class these portions of the narratives with the folklore, legends or mythology he had already found in the traditions of other religious faiths or had read in their scriptures. If he also finds that similar things are recorded of the *followers* of Jesus for a time and are referred to his action through them, will he not suppose that the one body of narratives is as likely to prove legendary as the other? And if this young scholar finds that those books of the New Testament in which there is little narrative or none at all nevertheless assume on the part of Jesus and his followers the possession of similar or greater powers than those mentioned in the narratives and that the names and powers which other religions attached to the objects of their worship correspond to those which are here connected with the name of Jesus as descriptions of his dignity, will he not conclude that this attitude of mind is characteristic of the New Testament as a whole? It does not follow that he would entertain any disrespect

toward these works on this account, for if he were religiously disposed as well as scientifically trained he might feel that human faith is so mighty a thing that it is unable to express itself adequately without resort to some such modes of utterance as these and in consequence he might view their representations as symbols of faith rather than records of external fact.

There is another series of impressions this young man would receive from the reading of these little books. He would find that in all these writings of the New Testament—whether narrative, epistolary or discursive—mingled with the features mentioned as so foreign to our customary modes of thinking, there are utterances of the sincerest and profoundest, most stimulating and most comforting devotion. He would find that with the sternest moral judgments upon human action there is united the tenderest interest in the happiness of men and evidence of the most unselfish effort to come to the hearts of the poor, the homeless, the friendless, the ignorant and the erring with the help they need. He would find in the writers a serene confidence that they who share these things are the destined leaders of mankind and the heirs of a perfect blessedness in a world to come. He would find also in them the spirit of the noblest self-sacrifice and a courage that shrank not from pain or death for the sake of their faith. I am sure that our young man would find his heart touched by these things and yearning at times for an inner

acquaintance with some of the experiences set forth in these writings at the same time that he regarded some of the things related there as legendary and their hold on the minds of men as temporary.

There is a further step. This reader would perceive that those fine and high qualities of soul that stir him so deeply are as closely associated with the name of Jesus in the minds of the writers as are the narratives some of whose features seem incredible as matters of fact. The question, "How came it to be so?" would force itself on his mind and demand an answer. The hope of discovering the answer would compel him to examine with the utmost thoroughness open to him the whole situation out of which these writings came, in order to find out how it was they ever came into existence at all. I believe that if he were a young man of sincere purpose and balanced judgment he would rise from his study with the firm and overwhelming conviction that, if there is to be any explanation at all of the narratives, it must point to a real human personality who lived among those people and impressed himself so powerfully on their minds that they could find no better way of telling what he had done for them and what they expected in consequence than by setting forth the force of his action and presence among them in terms of those deeds and powers that were customarily ascribed to beings of a divine order. The thing they did would be quite unnatural for men with our training but was perfectly natural

to men of their habits of thought and speech.

We may be pretty sure that such a student as I have spoken of would not be content to allow his interest in the accounts he found in the New Testament to drop away at this point. He would find in the situation an invitation to undertake the task at the very outset of acquiring a clear knowledge of the matters of fact that may be conceived as basic to everything else. He would become one of the large number of critical scholars who have sought by the most effective application of established methods of historical research to distinguish the "objective facts" of Jesus' career from those elements of the narratives which are due to the religious faith and fervor, the personal hopes and expectations, the inventive and constructive imagination of his followers. The outcome of the efforts that have been made in this direction are now fairly familiar to us all. The attempt to exhibit before us the actual Jesus as he was in himself, by eliminating those features which a native, popular pictorial art threw about him, by removing the oriental drapery from his figure has been, on the whole, disappointing. Of this the prolific crop of modern "lives" of Jesus is very convincing evidence.

In the case of the investigations that proceeded on the assumption that the contents of the narratives could be taken at their face value as eye-witnesses' accounts of facts and that the four main narratives could be construed by a process of harmonization

into a single consistent narrative it has become plain that apparent inconsistencies cannot be removed without violence. Where, without insisting on the harmony, it has been tried to write a broadly reliable "life" of Jesus it has become evident that the original narrators did not have this distinctly in mind and that the materials necessary are inadequately supplied. Where the presence of interpretative elements in the narratives has been clearly recognized and it has been sought to remove these in order to retain only the plainly certified facts, the resultant story is destitute of the inspiring faith that makes the biblical narratives such a mighty power in the world and becomes as well suited to weaken faith as to arouse it. The resultant figure of Jesus, when a purely scientific criticism has offered its product to us, is so clearly modernized that one is led to wonder how the commonplace figure that is left in place of the Jesus pictured in the Gospels could ever be expected to arouse in anybody the warm-hearted and conquering faith which those early Christians undoubtedly possessed. We have seen already that no relief can be found by seeking to retain his teachings rather than his personality because, in the first place, it cannot be done with assurance and, in the second place, because they obtain their meaning mostly from the character of him who gave them. With him left out, they tend to sink to the level of commonplaces.

Summarily, then, as to this point: We must

say that we have not in the New Testament a simple matter-of-fact statement of what Jesus said and did, and the more we try to make it appear so, the more evident is our failure. We have no clear right to claim possession of a *verbatim* report of his teachings or anything like it. True, there is in many places a marked originality in appearance, betokening the influence of a powerful personality. His stamp in a general way is on them. It is quite possible that there are instances, few or many, of exact quotations from his lips and in many passages there is a verisimilitude that inclines us to say, "This is Jesus' own utterance and no one else's." But we can never be quite sure that the verisimilitude is not owing to the fitness of such sayings to the state of mind those people had come to or to our own state of mind. What we are sure of is, their attitude toward him. We are sure that what they ascribed to him by way of word or deed was what they believed he had said or done or must have said or done under the circumstances described. Or there were circumstances of their own that demanded a word from him to sustain their hearts or a picture of his doings that would fire them with faith and courage. The undertaking to separate his real words and deeds from what they ascribed to him is a very precarious one and often clearly impossible of execution. It can never supply a sure basis for faith. It is my firm conviction that what we do possess is of vastly greater account. Instead of an irreducible residuum

of facts and sayings standing by themselves as the foundation of a superstructure of a modern faith we have an impressive picture of Jesus as he wrote himself down in the hearts of men around him. And it was done in such a way that the image of his person could never be deleted but went on repeating itself with ever growing force from generation to generation. His inward life and career and theirs became for ever inseparable.

Hence the New Testament representations of the character and career of Jesus are at the same time a genuine transcript of their own. In the midst of the varied and often trying experiences through which they were passing as they sought to sustain their strength against the attacks to which they were constantly subjected or to advance it among the people with whom they mingled their inspiration and their comfort came from the memory of the days of his presence with them. All—words and deeds and sufferings of his—were transfigured in their meaning because these men were sharers of his experiences and bearers of his cross. This is what we find in the Gospels as well as in the other writings. The evangelists' renderings of *his* teachings reflect *their own* as well. Their pictures of his career reflect the character of theirs. The sayings they attributed to him were the things they also said to one another as they communed together of their faith; the messages they attributed to him when he spoke to the people were the messages they were constantly giving

to other men; his sermons were their sermons, his parables their parables, his diatribes against the Pharisees and other perverters of the truth were the polemic they were accustomed to deliver against their Jewish opponents; and the promises they ascribed to him as he spoke to the sorrowing, the tempted and the sinning, were the promises they were accustomed to offer to people in those circumstances. Everywhere the two are so closely melted together that the attempt to separate them becomes more or less arbitrary. What these men did in this regard seemed perfectly natural at the time and it was quite in keeping with the literary customs of the age.

Are we, then, the worse off because the separation cannot be made? Far from it! The impossibility of making a clear distinction between the things that Jesus said and did, on the one hand, and the things his disciples conceived he must have said and done, on the other hand, so far from being a disadvantage to the Christian faith, turns out to be, on the contrary, a gain. For, in the first place, a knowledge of what he was in himself, apart from his place in the hearts of his followers and the glowing utterances in their spontaneous confessions of his worth to them, would yield us little more than an unfeeling and dumb skeleton of One whose destiny was to be alive forevermore. We can have little interest in him or in any one else apart from the impression he made on men at the time and afterwards. And yet this knowledge of what Jesus was

in himself is just what the authoritative creeds and confessions of faith have professed to furnish. Naturally enough, these professions lead to doubt and unfaith toward that which is offered as the object of faith. What, indeed, is any person or individual detached from those relations of fellowship with other persons in whose midst he lives? A doctrine of the person of Christ which aims at setting him by himself as a self-contained individual apart from the life he created in others by his fellowship with them yields us only a phantasm that bewilders and confounds us. And, in the next place, the safest index we can find to the true worth of any one lies not in the manner in which he stands distinct and solitary, complete in himself independently of that which he finds for himself in others, but it lies in the very attitude toward himself which he creates in others' minds, so that their character and his have become inseparable through the manner in which he has written himself down in them. The greatest tribute to be offered to the worth of any personality is to be discovered in the transformation he has wrought in others. This transformation in them is always reflected back upon the image they retain of him as its source. Paradoxical though it may seem, it is of more consequence for us to discover what Jesus' followers believed he said and did than to know exactly what he said and did apart from their belief.

We may say, therefore, that many of the marvels

which these men accredited to Jesus as his achievements may turn out to be of much less significance and importance to us than something else of which they give little more than hints or to which—if we except in part the fourth Gospel—they refer rarely. Greater than his healings of the sick by a touch or by a word, his feeding of hungry multitudes by a miraculous multiplication of loaves, his restoration of dead men to life; greater than his sayings and discourses—nay, greater than his very example of "the creed of creeds in loveliness of perfect deeds," is the faith in him which he created in the hearts of his disciples. The others passed a long time ago. If such as these were our chief inheritance from him, the more remote they become in time, the less effective must they become as directive of our lives or standards of our conduct. We might go further and say that under these conditions the further back from him we stand in time, the less encouragement his career would give to us. For he would be left standing out as a solitary form on a distant horizon, or a sudden and brief interpolation of a higher existence into the lower plane of ours, and the long and fruitless waiting for his return would issue in a loss of the hope he temporarily aroused in our hearts and, perchance, a growing bitterness would come in its stead. It is surely of great significance that, instead of this, the confidence of men in his worth has grown from generation to generation and never did the reverence for him or

the sense of his indispensability appear greater than today.

Undoubtedly the distinctive thing about the New Testament is the effort of the writers to delineate the personality of Jesus. Dismissing from our thought the prospect of showing that the picture is scientifically verifiable or even absolutely trustworthy as a record of observable fact, we see that these writings were produced in the interest of faith and that the features of their dominating figure are a transcript of faith. The measure of their success here is their great achievement. For they have succeeded in constructing the portrait of a human figure that has seemed to countless multitudes and scores of generations of men the answer of God to their longings for the vision of a personal state that will satisfy their deepest and purest aspirations. How did those people become possessed of this unparalleled power? For it seems at the first glance, at least, that it is one thing for such a personality to appear in the world and quite another thing for men to apprehend and appreciate him. Which of the prophets did not the fathers kill? Which of them do not the fathers still persist in killing? On the other hand, however, how can we say that the man is perfect who does not succeed in arousing in the minds of those who have the best means of knowing him the awareness of his perfection? Our first answer to the question as to the source of the portrait of Jesus in the New Testament must be, of

course, that it is to be found in the actual presence among men of the all-subduing, all-inspiring personality of Jesus who awakened them to the consciousness of an ideal that was so intimately united with his actual life that it must, perforce, forever after bear his name. But one would like to know how much of the picture was derived from their spiritual inheritance prior to his coming, how much was due to their own endeavors apart from their actual contact with him, and how much they owed distinctively to his own active impression upon them.

To questions such as these there can be, in the very nature of the case, no decisive answer. The unity of the inner life of these people can be as little divided into separate sections as can the inner life of any one of us today. It may be true that no man's inner life is a perfect unity. It may be that analysis can disclose various factors constitutive of any man's character, but in any case the analysis proceeds tentatively and the outcome is of uncertain value. No man's spiritual nature is a composite. The spiritual inheritance of these people, the contribution which Jesus made to their inner life by his personal contact with them and the natural fruitage of their own spontaneous spiritual activities were all fused in one and made forever inseparable. So that, paradoxical again as it may seem, while we must say that Jesus imparted to them the power to work their great achievement of giving to the world the image of their divine Lord, that he summoned forth in

them the latent energies that carried their faith and their longing upward to God (and these energies, but for him, so far as we can tell, would else have lain forever dormant and dead), and that he gave himself to them in the plenitude of his soul-penetrating power; at the same time we must say that it was they who made it possible for him to come to the rest of mankind in the way he has been doing. Whether or no there be in all men the same inherent ability which they showed, it is plain that it was these people who brought into action the deep spiritual discernment that fitted them to make the discovery of his worth to mankind. It was they who gave him to the world. And they did it, not by a sort of photographic process which leaves the personal originality and creative power of the artist out of the picture; nor by a sort of short-hand preservation of his words which would exclude the interpretative genius of the reporter and leave us only a fixed law that "kills," and cannot "make alive"; but they did it by filling the portrait with the whole wealth of their spiritual nature. In the figure of Jesus which has been transmitted to the later Christian generations he and they are for ever joined in one. They succeeded in conceiving the image of a personality that they believed would conquer the world, and the course of history has been a progressive confirmation of their faith. He succeeded in imparting to them the inspiration to this achievement with such impressive force

that the Perfect One that floated into their mind and out again into the great sea of human life was, so far as they could tell, just Jesus as he was in himself. And were they not right? In any instance to which we can point, the real man, the true man, is not some hypothetical figure standing by himself apart but the man whose inmost soul is reflected in the souls of others.

It seems, then, that when we talk of these spiritual possessions or achievements of men we are exposing ourselves to the charge of the purely formal logician that we are arguing in a circle. So it may be. Perchance we cannot escape the charge. Perchance there is no need that we should. If the laws of formal logic are fixed, the standard of personal character is not. The personal character that is fixed loses in us its personality. The discovery of the perfect personality is gradual.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the early Christians as a body regarded Jesus as morally perfect or sinless, that is, when the question arose in their minds with such force as to demand an answer. To be sure, the distinct affirmation of it is very rare. At best there are only three or four places, found in certain of the more reflective portions of the New Testament, where the assertion is made, and there it is only partially explicit. It is not possible for us in the present connection to undertake a discussion of the separate passages where such statements are made. It is enough to point out that they indicate

that, as the theoretical interpretation of the faith progressed, the question was sure to arise. The manner of its treatment would depend much on the conception of sin which obtained among the people to whom the writings referred. Far more significant than any number of direct assertions of his immaculateness of character is the implication conveyed by the entire attitude of Christians toward his name. It showed implicit confidence, absolute trust, unquestioning loyalty to the meaning of all he said and did *as they understood it.* They had found in him what they had longed for and what, as they believed, the whole world needed.

I feel, however, that the very raising of the theoretical question of Jesus' sinlessness tends to divert attention from the governing interest of these writings—and for that matter, from the governing interest of true religious faith anywhere. The supreme interests of life are the practical. The theoretical are quite subsidiary and must not be allowed to dominate the life of a believer. Our New Testament books were not, to any appreciable degree, produced by philosophical idealists who were trying to present in reasoned form a character that would satisfy permanently the longings of men for a concrete ideal—even though one might say they accomplished it. They and their readers belonged to the class that were and still are immersed in cares and anxieties, sins and sorrows of many kinds and most of them of a very concrete sort. The only kind of

perfection they cared about, after all, in any one for whom their allegiance might be claimed was his perfect ability to save them. Their regard for Jesus was not the wondering admiration of some abstractly perfect character, such as recluses of old or sentimentalists of our time might dream of. Nor was it a sublime approval of the sentiments he was said to be continually expressing. This would mean little more than to say that he pleased them because he was so much like themselves as they pictured themselves at their best.

The important thing about these books is not the belief or theory of the writers that one had appeared among them as the solitary instance of pure goodness in the world. This would be, as we have seen, no sufficient basis of a gospel for all mankind but might turn out to be almost the very opposite. Such an one might be the despair of men rather than their hope. In fact the very treatment of such a question even now tends to become a matter of purely academic interest and to divert attention from the real issues when men are seeking the better life. The discussion of it must turn out to be indecisive and fruitless. For the judgment one may reach on this question discloses most of all one's own subjective standard or, at best, the conventional standard of his time and place. In the end, the only one who is fully competent to reach a decision on such a case is he who is himself both sinless and omniscient. We, poor mortals, in our ignorance and sin must

proceed on a different basis. The early Christians, I repeat, were not thinking of such an individual as we in academic fashion are pleased to call the ideal of humanity but they were people to whose minds the sense of need was ever present and the one test they thought of applying to Jesus or any one who might offer to help them was his competence to cope with the ills they dreaded or were suffering from at the time. The Gospels everywhere reflect these conditions. Subjection to the authority of the foreigner and the terror of his power; the despotism of a home-grown ecclesiastical hierarchy; the anarchical reaction against both; the prevalence of poverty, hunger, disease and helplessness; the longing and expectancy for the advent of an Inbringer of deliverance—these are everywhere. The recital of his words and deeds correspond to these needs. How marvellously rich they are in inspiration and comfort I need not stay to try to tell. The Gospels and the other writings teem with assurance that he brought to them a supremacy over all evil forces, even over death itself. Had not he himself gone down to death at the hands of their foes and his! But his resurrection turned its horror into glory. They too would conquer. Thus no collection and organization of his teachings, however valuable it might prove as material for a biblical theology, and no presentation of the particular things he did, as supposedly an example for us, can ever reflect adequately the power of the Christian faith. The force

of the appeal that any or all of these can make today lies in their universalistic character. It is only as they disclose to us the answer to our needs at this our own time and place that we can see in the face of him from whom they were affirmed to have come the lineaments of a perfect personality. And this, I must add, requires much more than a reproduction of their quality of piety in our hearts. It requires a piety as much deeper and broader than theirs as the sweep of human life in our age and the strenuousness of its demands exceed theirs.

Naturally, therefore, the representations which the New Testament writers make of the personality of Jesus must be used with discrimination. The accounts of such scenes as his exorcism of demons, his transfiguration on a mountain top, his stilling of storms, his summoning of deceased persons back to life, his physical ascension into the sky before the eyes of men, picture him as exercising a kind of magical power and as having access to influences of a kind extraneous to our lives. To men of that time these might seem evidences of his high calling but they make him in a corresponding degree a stranger and an alien to us. In all this our minds are drawn to the region of the mysterious, the unaccountable, the unknowable. With a personality whose native abode is there we can never be at home. Not only are we unable to do such things as these but we do not desire to do them. The supplementation of one's native powers in this externalistic fashion suggests

to us the imperfect recognition of the worth of personality. These representations of the relation of man to the universe pertain to the stage of human progress in which the benumbing fear of cosmic and extra-cosmic forces, of impersonal or half-personal spirit, of demonic powers, bad or good, was still exercising a powerful control over the thought and actions of men. In all this we see lingering in the minds of these early Christians the old oriental dread of, and subjection to the power of the non-personal cosmos. We feel now that if such representations as these were inseparable from his real character he would be separated from us in the deepest meaning of his nature and we should find the prospect of a perfect affiliation with him far removed from us. In this case, too, human salvation is conceived in relation to existences strange to us and must always have a character somewhat alien to the growing self-consciousness of men. We know of no means by which we can be carried into that unknown realm nor do our longings reach out in that direction. Therefore we are unable to see in the representations we have just spoken of the perfection of personality, but rather its disparagement.

But how different from these are the impressions made on our minds by the recital of the Master's inner attitude toward the poor, the sick and the repentant! How contrasted with the emotions we experience when we read the story of his soul's life in the journey to the cross on which he was to

die! The reality of the inward strain experienced in Gethsemane, his magnanimity toward those who came to arrest him, his calm dignity before his judges, his pity and his prayer for those who were killing him, his self-commitment to God at the end—how natural it all seems in one who had lived as He! Efforts to make of these things a part of a prearranged plan of salvation are only offensive now. For these deeds of his bring him near to us in our hours of struggle to do and endure to the end and they appeal to our desire to raise our manhood to a higher level of worth. Jesus' endurance of death, the grandeur of his self-affirmation in its presence, his power over men's hearts afterwards produce in our hearts the certainty of conquest over death in the entire depth of its meaning. That is the heart of the Christian faith always.

As the growing knowledge and religious experience of the Christian people during these eighteen centuries and more of their history have issued in a state of mind that calls for a discriminating use of the narrative materials of the New Testament, it also calls for a similar discrimination in the treatment of the epistolary, discursive and predictive portions. Paul, for example, finds the experience "when it pleased God," as he says, "to reveal his Son in me," the focal point of interest in the outcome of Jesus' career. He finds his own life's purpose determined for him in the great act of Jesus' self-giving on the cross: "I have been crucified with Christ;

and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me." We find him revolutionizing the popular view of the gift of the Spirit by setting the extranaturalistic reference at the periphery of the Christian faith and practically nullifying these miraculous gifts or, at least, placing the idea of the *charismata* at the periphery of the Christian life. Instead, he internalized and ethicised the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit by which the Christian man lives and walks is the principle of the higher life as against the "flesh," the principle of the lower life. That is, the impartation of the spirit is a bestowment of moral power and the fruits are moral—love, joy, peace, long suffering, goodness and the like. Our personality is enhanced thereby, for the very mind of Christ is in us. Christ himself becomes identical with the indwelling Spirit which is reproducing in the Christian the action of the principle of vicariousness that was the mind of Christ, "who for our sakes humbled himself unto death." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." "We have died with Christ and have been made alive again in him." What is the value of those external bestowments of an absent Christ referred to in such phenomena as the gift of tongues compared with the tremendous moral power of the faith in his inward presence? Jesus is not made any

longer a figure of the past standing isolated in his peculiar individuality and destined to be a fading figure as the ages grow, but his personality has entered into ours transfusing it and ever fulfilling itself more perfectly in ours. The subjective experience of the transforming power of a personality who gives himself unreservedly for others has transfused the historic figure and made it everlastingly present as the very self of our self.

But when, in contrast, Paul turns his passionate portrayal of the Christain's inner striving for the better life into terms of a cosmic movement the impression it makes on our minds today is of a very different kind from the foregoing. The intercession of the Spirit on our behalf, the groanings for betterment which we experience within ourselves seem to be represented as moments in the movement of a universe that "groans and travails in pain together until now." If our personal strivings are to be explained as significant of the universal strife of cosmic forces, then personality seems to fall into a plane of existence lower than the cosmos, to be of subordinate worth, and to be destined to dissolution. When, again, in the epistle to the Colossians he places Jesus at the head of those semi-personal or impersonal energies which the Gnostics commonly represented as the causes of cosmic changes—thrones, dominions, principalities, powers—Jesus is once more removed far from us. He has passed into the realm where the personal and the non-personal

are fused and our hope of rising to personal perfection by normal and native processes of our spirits lies prostrate.

The higher Pauline view of the relation of the personality of the Christ to the Spirit is hinted at in the Synoptic Gospels but dominates the Johannine image of Jesus. His work is represented as not possibly completed in the earthly career of an individual but as perpetuated and progressively perfected in the growing inner life of his disciples. There can be little doubt that the aim of the writer was to substitute this for the apocalypses that the Synoptists use when they set forth the future work of Jesus in terms of vast and appalling cosmic changes. "I will not leave you orphans; I come to you. . . . Because I live ye shall live also. . . . If a man love me he will keep my words; and my father will love him; and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. . . . I will love him and will manifest myself to him. . . . I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all the truth. . . . He shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you." At this point the climax of the new self-consciousness of those early followers of Jesus is reached. Their deeper sense of personal worth was lifting them out of the evil world around them. They had found the perfect personality and in the discovery of him they had found their own personality as well. Life had

now a new meaning to them. It could no longer be described in terms of what they had been—for their sins were forgiven, forthgiven, detached from them as not exhibiting their true selfhood—but its true worth could be described only in terms of what they were yet to be. "The revealing of the sons of God," which Paul had spoken of, should take place when they should "be like him and see him as he is." How natural it was that to such a writer the perfection of the personality of Christ could not be disclosed until he had reached his self-fulfillment through the achievement of giving himself in supreme self-sacrifice to their very souls. And at the same time it is seen that the discovery of the higher personality and one's self-attainment to it are not successive events but one event. Each is implicated in the other.

But while in these later Johannine writings there are still traces of those features of the earlier pictures of the Apocalypse which describe Jesus' personality in terms which subject its activity to the intervention of supernatural cosmic forces, yet the prevailing meaning is plain. There is to be no violence offered to our personality in the redemptive process. I am never so consciously self-governing and self-determining in my action as when I find myself attracted and subdued by the higher personality. Then alone can I be my true self, the man I was meant to be. In the end that personality alone can attract my affections, retain my confidence and

control my will, who enables me to be aware of my true self, my better self, the man I am to be. He enables me to construe the purpose of my life in terms of that which I see in him. He has become my Lord, not in the sense that he can dictate for me the direction in which I must go, for that would deprive me of that inner force without which I cannot be truly personal, but in the sense that he projects his selfhood into mine and effectuates in my spirit the activities of his own. Every person does this in some degree and without it our lives could never have the unity of purpose that they do have with one another. And when I find one in whom I see that which can only fulfill and not destroy my true selfhood, my attachment to him becomes the indispensable condition of my perfection. It is this interpretation of the significance of the career of Jesus which is to us the most impressive of all the aspects of him presented to us. It is the heart of that which we are accustomed to call "the atonement."

We have seen that already before our New Testament was completed the Christian Gospel was passing rapidly out from the moral and religious atmosphere of Judaism into the broad spaces of the Graeco-Roman world. There it made its appeal to the most deeply religious spirits among the mixed populations thrown together by the Roman conquests under one supreme authority. The Christian teachers found themselves confronted with the serious prob-

lem of interpreting their message to that mystical and speculative spirit which the western Aryans had brought with them from their ancestral abodes in the East. It is true that these western Aryans had not gone as far in the direction of depersonalizing and denaturing existance as did the Brahmanic philosophy that ruled the East. Yet, under the guiding hand of Plato, a hierarchy of ideas had displaced the family of concrete deities that reigned over the world and men, according to the ancient Grecian mythology, and the supreme deity had been turned into the Supreme Idea, the all-inclusive metaphysical good. The New Platonic philosophy which arose about the beginning of the Christian era and had its chief centre of influence in Alexandria, sought to mediate salvation to the broken and oppressed peoples of the Graeco-Roman world by imparting to them a divinely bestowed enlightenment. Receiving this enlightenment the human spirit would rise from materiality, grossness, error, corruption and death to the region of light and life from which it had supposedly fallen. It was a philosophy of redemption and seemed to accord with the Christian message of redemption by a Christ who had descended from heaven to earth in order to raise men up to heaven with him. Such a message appealed powerfully to the conquered peoples whose religions were now compulsorily practiced in secret. For in their "mysteries" they had sought to come into union of nature with their deities.

When "Jesus and the ressurrection" was preached to the votaries of these faiths and to the advocates of the philosophy that was akin to them, he displaced in their minds their ancient deities, but it was at the cost of being conceived in their likeness and his salvation in terms of the kind of redemption which their worshippers craved. His death and resurrection were made the death and resurrection of a God and by him they were to be redeemed from the bondage of darkness, error and metaphysical corruption and to enter into the incorruptible, immortal life of deity.

This is at bottom the theory that underlies the Nicene Creed and the later Catholic creeds. The crucial point in them is the matter of his being of the divine nature or essence, on the one hand, so as to be able to redeem—and of human nature, on the other hand, so that it might be redeemed. Thus in the minds of those converts from the ethnic faiths his distinctive personality was left obscured and was subordinated in importance to the divine nature. Correspondingly, the distinct, individual personality of those who became subjects of his divine power was submerged in the human nature which was to be redeemed. In this way the whole work of redemption was represented as the incarnation of the divine nature, in order that human nature in us might be the recipient of it and become immortal. It is no wonder if we find that the men who were to be made the subjects of this transformation were in large

measure denuded of the rights of personality, their power of initiative and self-affirmation denied, and themselves reduced to the necessity of becoming the passive subjects of an inscrutable change of nature and an inexplicable enlightenment through the administration of mysteries (sacraments) in priestly hands. Not perfect *personality* but perfect *nature* is the ideal held before the eyes of men by this theory.

But, even so, the vision of the Perfect Personality persisted and in course of time reaffirmed its dominion over the human heart. Not even a complicated heirarchical system and its organized sacramentalism could conceal from view the mighty One that had won his way into human hearts and was really compelling a reconstruction of their whole view of the world. The creeds that substituted a nature or essence for a personality could not obliterate the loving memory which the still continued tradition of Jesus and his estimate of men preserved in action. And, accordingly, the theologians were greater than their creed and the members of the Catholic Church were greater than their church.

This is the more manifest when we pass from the Graeco-Roman world and the Greek Catholic Church to the mediaeval Roman Empire and the mediaeval Roman Church. The Clugniac Revival, the Crusades, and the meditations of the mediaeval mystics testify to the manner in which he was reasserting his right over men's hearts. The individual human personality came in for the recognition of his pre-

rogative. The elaborate penitential system that was developed in the hope of keeping him in subjection testified to the manner in which the Christian faith was elevating his sense of selfhood above the whole church system. Salvation was becoming consciously not a matter of "nature" but an ideal for the man. The system that arose out of a metaphysical conception of salvation began to break in pieces. Men who were reading the New Testament —and their number grew mightily—followed Jesus in his ministry to the needy, walked with him the way to the cross, sought in their Gethsemane to find fellowship with him, the Tempted One, conceived a personal nearness to him and a personal likeness to him to be dearer than all else. Monks and nuns found in him a brother and bridegroom to their souls. He was to them the Chief Celibate, in whom the grace of renunciation was supremely exhibited. Their aim was to reproduce in their souls and bodies the experiences through which he had passed and in going the way of the cross with him they were, they believed, in real fellowship with him. Of more importance to us is the fact that multitudes of the Bible-reading laity, as they caught the image of Jesus set forth in the Gospels, drew away from the hierarchical and sacramental system in which they had been in bondage and conceived in likeness to him a consciousness of independence that shocked and startled the church authorities and drove them to make the vain attempt to extinguish the new light

that had come with the sight of him into the souls of men. The whole issue resolved itself into a struggle between the power of an organization of supposed supernatural forces, on the one hand, and the power of the new estimate of personal worth that had come to men's hearts, on the other hand. The fires of the Roman Inquisition proved impotent to destroy finally the latter. It became the soul of the Protestant religious Reformation.

The Reformation signalized the advent of this new type of self-consciousness in western Europe. The sense of immediate relationship with God rose to dominance in the Protestant heart. God's absolute sovereignty in the inner and outer life of the individual and the eternal significance of the individual came to expression in the doctrines of election and predestination of each to his final destiny. The absolute sufficiency of the atonement wrought by Christ and its appropriation by the individual through immediate faith in him guaranteed the man's safety with or without sacraments. The absolute perfection of the regenerating work of the Spirit of God who attested himself by the "secret testimony" given immediately to the soul of the believer identified the final word of God with the highest action of the human spirit. All this, and much more of the same quality, seemed at the time to show that personality had come to true self-recognition at last. But such was really far from being the case. The accepted conception of the personality of Jesus furnishes the

clue to our judgment. In the orthodox representations of him at the time we see the grandeur of one who possessed in himself in a real life on earth the infinite power and glory of God and who gave himself, nevertheless, to the endurance of an infinite penalty for sin for the sake of men who were worthless apart from the worth he thereby gave to them. But the interest in him personally is mostly limited to this one point. He is a being far superior to the world-fleeing Jesus of the mediaeval ascetic, but he is presented as an eternal divine personality whose native abode is in a different realm from ours and whose higher nature is an inscrutable mystery to us. His appropriation to himself of an impersonal human nature was in order that in it this divine person, whose nature is "impassible," might suffer redemptively for men. His whole career is interpreted as furnishing evidence that it was so and his death was an event of an order that pertained exclusively to himself. The gulf between the essentially human and the essentially divine still remains fixed and never to be crossed by us. How artificial this entire construction seems to us now! How we miss the humanness of Jesus as he sought to fulfill the imperative of his own self-legislative potencies ("I must") and felt his way to perfection as we must do! We are excluded from a true fellowship with him in it all, for his life was metamorphosed into a pre-arranged program known in advance (through his divine omniscience) to himself, which ours can never be.

Moreover, we are left in ourselves without the crown of personality when we are made solely beneficiaries of his atonement and remain for ever excluded from the fellowship of his sufferings, since atonement is solely *for* us and never *by* us. And when we reach the doctrine of a double predestination and its consequences in an eternally dual destiny for mankind our personality suffers a violent diremption. For the supposition that we could be consenting parties to this predetermination of human personalities to an end so absolutely contrary to all the hopes that make our personality what it is, is to forget that our individual personality can never come to its perfection except by a communion of inner life as wide as the race.

But while it is evident that the doctrines and practices of the early Protestants beclouded the character of perfect personality, it is also evident that the genius of the Reformation was to create in men's minds a powerful impulse in the direction of affirming and vindicating the supremacy of personality over all systems and orders, whether political or ecclesiastical, intellectual or ethical, material or spiritual. Luther's doctrine that each man is justified through inward faith and that this faith contains in itself the whole truth of the Christian religion and Calvin's doctrine that each one is separately elected and foreordained to eternal life drew attention to the inner wealth and the independent worth of every man, though neither of these great leaders saw

this very clearly. The fruits were seen in the manner in which the individual Protestant began to assert his personal rights as against the system, no matter what it might be, in the midst of which he was born and whose sovereignty over him seemed inalienable. In the consciousness of his immediate relation with God the man became aware of his right and power to subjugate the system and make it tributary to the worth of the personality for whose sake it had been created—the very antithesis of the spirit that had come to reign in Catholicism. The story of the working out of the premises of the principle would carry us far into many fields of human endeavor. The whole of the great fight for personal liberty, so thrilling to the student of modern history, is the story of the manner in which the self-affirmation in Jesus of Nazareth fructified the souls of men when they caught the new vision of him and enabled them to reiterate his self-affirmation in themselves. The rise and growth of religious Dissent in England and the demand for liberty of conscience portended, as some of its enemies saw, the coming of a storm in many realms of human life. When men felt that the perfection of their personality could come only in a communion of free persons like themselves and created the "free churches" in which they might hope for the realization of their hope, they paved the way for the remoulding of the forms of the political world in which they lived. The civil war in England, the American revolution and even the French rev-

olution signalize the manner in which the sense of personal right and worth works its way to dominance when men fail to see that the only permanently tolerable form of government is that in which personal initiative has free play so that every personality may come to its true self under it.

The great religious revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries worked in the same direction, even when the subjects of those revivals failed to discern it. They were in inner sympathy with the great movement in psychology inaugurated by John Locke, where the whole body of human knowledge, so far from being given authoritatively from without, tends to be viewed as springing out of the native inner activity of the human soul. The great missionary enterprise inaugurated by William Carey, the free-church man, was kindred in spirit for it showed that the reality of personal relation with God and the capacity of every human soul to share it were becoming the dominant conviction of a world-conquering Christianity. The tendency is to exalt personality above all church-systems and to regard them all as temporary and transitory inasmuch as they are purely tributary to personal worth.

The same story is to be read in the transformation that is taking place in the jurisprudence and courts of justice of modern Christian countries, where justice is ceasing to be the infliction of a mere *quid pro quo* for injuries done (in the case of criminal law) and is coming to be dominated by the purpose

to realize the worth of every man, the criminal included. The tremendous sweep of the scientific movement has tended, on the whole, in the same direction. The scientific impulse of modern times springs mainly out of the confidence of our spirit that it is capable of compassing a true knowledge of the universe by its own inherent powers and of making the forces of the universe tributary to the purposes of a personal career. Thus the progress of science has worked powerfully toward the affirmation of the supreme worth of personality. In other words, the human personality finds that the mastery of the universe is involved in the realization of true selfhood. Our contention on this point is being confirmed by the growing concentration of philosophic reflection on the meaning of personality.

Reviewing our lengthy journey let us try to state in a few sentences the outcome of our study up to the present:

The coming of Jesus Christ into the world is an historical movement ever progressively creative of a new experience and a correspondingly new estimate of the meaning and worth of a human life. By the insight men obtained into the significance of his career there grew up in the hearts of his followers a conviction of their superiority in the world and of the tributary relation of all things to the aim that had come to birth in their souls to be like him.

It brought into existence a new and higher communion of men with men and created in them a mu-

tual appreciation, so that each saw his own inner worth revealed in the others. In this new unity of life with one another they felt that they were the community destined to bring mankind to its final destiny in a perfect unity of life like their own.

It introduced a new and higher appreciation of men universally. It discerned in the lowest the potentialities of the perfect life and proceeded to refashion the life of mankind in all its ranges in accordance with the prophetic anticipation they had obtained of the future of the race.

Men have been enabled to do this by virtue of the impact of the personality of Jesus Christ upon their minds as his personality has progressively disclosed itself in the creative activity of those who saw in him from the outset the embodiment of the highest and best hopes of the race. That is to say, in the sublime tragedy of his cross men have seen the power of a self-giving for all men which is the same as the affirmation of a right and power to rule them without limitation. In the subjection to such a rule as this men find their highest realization of liberty and power. In such a personality, ever fulfilling itself in us, we see the warrant for faith in the existence of God, for this self-giving is surely the very godness of God. To believe in this Jesus Christ is to believe in God.

CHAPTER III.

LECTURE III. THE MAKING OF THE BETTER WORLD

IF we may discover the motive power of the Christian faith by a study of the writings that constitute our New Testament we may say that it lies in the union of two outstanding visions, namely, the vision of the Christ and the vision of the Kingdom of God. In the former there appears the image of the Perfect Man and in the latter, the image of the Perfect World. The manner in which the Christian faith has come increasingly to control the course of mankind is seen in the way in which the former of these has come to govern the character of the latter. The Perfect World becomes the world in which all the inhabitants possess in themselves the image of the Perfect Man. All the other features which human imagination has attached to the Perfect World reflect the external conditions prevailing among Christians at various times. But *their* influence is only temporary while *his* is constant.

The historical course of the Christian religion shows that the advent of such a figure into the natural sphere of our life is not to be regarded as merely a single isolated act. It is no mere solitary occurrence

that may never happen again, no mere past event that lies in our hearts as a sweet memory as long as it can be vividly preserved there but is bound to become a fading image as the time between him and us widens. If it were so, then its gradual disappearance beyond the range of our vision would tend, as soon as we turned our eyes to present conditions, to make the present and future of our restless life seem all the darker by contrast. That it has not done so but on the contrary, has filled human life with increasingly higher meaning and richer hope is the significant fact.

The features of the personality of Jesus depicted in the Gospels which have been the most powerfully effective in human betterment are not those which represent him as in the possession of powers extraneous to the normally conditioned human life but those in which he appears as naturally belonging both inwardly and outwardly to our race. It is not because he could cast out demons and heal diseases with a word that he is most attractive to us. There is something uncanny in one whose claims rest on such a ground as that. If we could do such things the ultimate gain for men as compared with what we can do in the exercise of our normal powers of healing would be very doubtful. Disease would be a less serious fact than it is, it would not call forth our sympathies and sacrifices as it does and life would be less deeply moral than it is now. Neither is it because he was able, if he so willed, to feed the hun-

gry multitudes with a few cakes that he attracts the hopes of mankind toward himself. We cannot do that, and it would be unfortunate both for us and for the hungry if we could. Both we and they are still dependent and are ever to be dependent on careful forethought and laborious effort, if there is to be safety against hunger and starvation. And it is well that it is so. Neither, again, is it because when the elements of nature were battling against him and his disciples and threatening them with death he could still the tempest by his voice and bring them to safety that we have come to put our trust in him and seek his fellowship. Such a display of power leaves us strangers to his secret. For we must have recourse to the laborious task of learning the art of navigation before we can face the storm with confidence. If tempests could be so easily mastered how little we could know of the worth of our inborn capacity to conquer nature by diligence! No! the Jesus of the Gospels attracts us to his company, not because he could free himself and others at will from the limitations incident to life in this world of ours or set aside the common obligations that bind us down under the bonds of labor and pain, but because we have discovered in him a sympathetic entering into the needs of our common humanity, his assumption of the obligation to help men and a summons unto his disciples to a sense of responsibility for their welfare in every respect. If his cross awakens us to love and trust, it is not be-

cause we see that he was armed with an infinite knowledge and power that made him secure, if he so willed, against the fear or the power of death. That would be to put him far from us at the moment of our greatest need of fellowship, since we, poor, ignorant mortals, cannot help but succumb when our bodies are impaled on a gibbet and have no such knowledge in advance of what is to happen. But it is because his yoke and ours are the same and because with him we walk in triumphant fearlessness in the presence of death and seemingly awful defeat. Not in the freedom from physical and mental limitations, not in dazzling, impenetrable deeds, not in the exercise of incomprehensible powers, not in the ability to transcend at will our native human conditions and call legions of irresistible angels to his side do we discover the secret of his power to redeem our common life and transfigure it with a heavenly glory. Not there—but in the discovery to our spirits that he is the true man of us all in his familiarity from within with human experience of the deepest kind, in his interpretation of its meaning and worth, in his exaltation of the features of life that are common to us all to dignity and grandeur—in a word, in his universal *sociableness* has he become an abiding asset to the life of humanity and discovered to us the way to the better world.

At this point we have reached the matter of central interest in our present study. His disciples from the first believed they had his secret. He had

taken them into his heart. They had found a new fellowship. It was to him personally they were drawn from the first. With him they had entered into a new order of life. Their sense of his greatness became a sense of their own. His destiny and theirs became inseparable. A cleavage between him and them and, in consequence, a cleavage among themselves became intolerable to their minds. This simple and commonplace statement becomes of the highest significance. I said in the last lecture that the great achievement of Jesus was his creation of faith in himself on the part of his disciples. We may now say, in expansion of this statement, that his great creative deed was to bring into being a communion of human spirit with human spirit which was of the same order as his own personal communion with God. The members of this communion had begotten in them an estimate of one another's worth as infinite, so that all else in the universe is conceived as tributary to it. Jesus' achievement is the creation of a Christian communion. This communion is of such a quality that as it has perpetuated itself through the successive generations of men it has been able to make the natural relations of men with one another organic to its propagation and development. Through it the present world of men has become a better world in the making. This is the thesis to which for a few moments I must bespeak your patient attention. In order that this may be done I must first take a little time to refer to the

views which men in various lands and different ages have entertained respecting the relation between the world in which we now live and another world to which men go when they die or may have come from at birth.

Students of primitive types of human communities tell us that in the remotest ages and among the crudest peoples known to us there was a common feeling or intuition of being in contact at times or even all the time with other existences somewhat like themselves but different in that, among other things, they were most of the time invisible and could become visible at will. These tribes, so remote from us in time and manner of life were very like us in that they were probably as much interested as we in the world of "nature" so called and as much affected by what happened in it. Unlike us, however, they had not yet learned to discover in "nature" a causal or philosophical unity, but events in the world seemed very often detached happenings with no more order about them than the irregular doings of these people themselves. Unlike us, again, they had not learned to unpeople that world of nature but saw in occurrences around them, especially the unexpected occurrences, the activities of living beings whose impulses and thoughts were like their own. Not only fearsome facts, like the earthquake, the eclipse, the tempest, the lightning and the thunder but the daily breach of continuity in the common course of things or even the common things themselves, like the

whispering of the dry leaves or the murmuring of the bushes in the wind, the prattling of the running brook or the strange sounds that awake the sleeper at night, were the immediate doings of living beings. By them "nature" was inhabited or, at least they roamed about in it and thereby brought men under their influence. To the ancient Hebrew the evening breeze might be the rustling of the garments of Jehovah as he walked in his garden at the cool of the day. The sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees might be to the waiting and impatient warrior a signal that the Jehovah of armies was rushing forth to the battle. Or the roaring of the waves of the sea and the answering roar of the heavens might be the voice of the animate Deep below calling unto the Deep above. Indeed it was possible, so some ancients thought, that everything had an *anima,* a soul, and men felt a kinship, marked by mingled hope and fear, with the animals, the trees, the flowers and even with things like the winds and waters, that we call inanimate.

The interest they felt in these things was deeper than that of the purely objective observer or that of the impersonal and disinterested pursuit of science to which we flatter ourselves as having attained. They felt too deeply affected by outer things for that. The pleasant sunshine, the cooling breeze and the falling rain were the beneficences of kindly disposed visitants. But the smiting and killing blows of the torrid sun or the lightning, the crushing power

of the falling rock or tree or the mysterious snatch-away of the breath from the body were the deeds of malevolent or hateful beings, like angry or hateful men. The sense of dependence upon these other beings for good or evil was ever upon the minds of these early peoples and the thing they desired above all was some way of controlling them for their own personal interest. Here is where science, the daughter of magic, began its wonderful career, and here, perhaps, religion also began. Both hold that within or behind or beyond the visible there is an invisible. In both there is a reaching out to a world or sphere of being akin to our own and yet far other than ours. How to escape from the ill that comes to us from that world or to avail one's self of its good, is the problem common to both.

The interest in the other region was sustained and heightened by the constant occurrence of death. Increasing population and growing knowledge added to the impressiveness of that event. It was always painful to think upon, always bore the appearance of tragedy. For the tenderness of affection was wounded by it, the forward look was contradicted by it and it seemed to speak of malignancy. Men had seen the cruel blow of anger take away the breath. Might it not be that every death was due to a similar cause? Death, not life, was the mystery. Whither went the spirit when it left the body? Sleep and death were much alike. In a dream or trance or vision a departed one might be seen for a

time, only to disappear again and at last never again to reappear. At such times strange figures also appeared, some of them beautiful and kindly and some of them hateful and fearful to look upon. Perchance at such times it was our breath or spirit that wandered away to that other realm, to return again at the moment of awaking?

If the dead all went to that world, were they worse off than the living? It must often have seemed so. Else why this shrinking from death on the part of all? Might not their taking away be the deed of some such being as we see in our dreams when the spirit goes a-wandering out into that other world? Whatever be the answer, at any rate, the power of the other world over the present must be very great. Safety and peace must lie in the cultivation of the favor of those who dwell there and in the discovery of their purposes, if that may be. Many were the artifices to gain the needed knowledge. Something seemed to be learned from the irruptions of those beings of another world into ours. The practices of necromancers and soothsayers who contrived to get into touch with the invisible, the speculations of thinkers who strove to build a theory of that world by means of the symbols of it which they thought they found in this world, and the ancient mythologies, which reflect the picturesqueness of the interpretations of existence made of old, are all registers of the irrepressible craving in the bosoms of men for a better world, a world in which all the good

things of the present world could be retained or recovered and the evil things escaped. For, whether that other world were a better or a worse world than this, men always desired the better, be it here or there.

The uncertainty they felt about the other world was deep. All seemed to go to it at death but whether there was real life awaiting them there or only a shadowy existence was doubtful. The general feeling favored the latter. We remember the Hebrew Sheol and the Greek Hades, so like it. For the ordinary man it was

> "A land of darkness and of the shadow of death;
> A land of thick darkness, as darkness itself;
> A land of the shadow of death without any order,
> And where the light is as darkness."

And yet, in comparison with a life of pain and wretchedness here it might appear to the weary soul as in some ways better:

> "There the wicked cease from troubling
> And there the weary are at rest.
> There the prisoners are at ease together;
> They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
> The small and the great are there;
> And the servant is free from his master."

There was a common belief that those who had

lived the more worthily here and the mighty leaders of the people would enjoy an immortality like the gods that came to men from time to time, while others would fade gradually out of existence just as the memory of them faded gradually from the minds of their friends. Even the gods are depicted sometimes as longing for a bit of the real life of flesh and blood that men enjoy here. So that we must conclude that the world awaiting men after death was for the generality of mankind an uninviting prospect. The hope of a better world was very dim indeed. Brahmanic philosophy predicated an almost infinite series of rebirths awaiting the great masses of men before they could enter upon the higher life that lay beyond and reach the goal of final absorption into the Infinite and Final Principle of all being. The impersonal principle, Karma, which brought men into a lower or a higher human, or a sub-human or super-human existence after the present would operate perfectly, but who could tell what it might have in store for himself? So forbidding was the prospect that the reforming Buddhist philosophy took a wholly pessimistic view of personal existence in any realm and permitted, as the sole hope, the attainment of the goal of final extinction—Nirvana. The Graeco-Romans and other peoples over whom they ruled were more hopeful in that they conceived the possibility of mortal men participating in the incorruptness of deity, without the loss of personality, and sharing at last the

immortality of the gods. But this was rather for the elect few, especially those who had been initiated by secret ceremonies into the hidden life. For the multitudes the future was dark, and one might almost say that, with here and there an exception, the ancient world of men raised one sustained cry of protest against death. The language of the Hebrew Psalmist is native to humanity at large:

"My soul is full of troubles,
And my life draweth nigh unto Sheol.
I am reckoned with those who go down into the pit,
I am as a dead man that hath no help.
Cast off among the dead,
Like the slain that lie in the grave,
Whom thou rememberest no more,
And they are cut off from thy hand."

On the part of the Christian, compared with the non-Christian, as we learn from the utterance of Christian piety preserved in our great stores of Christian literature, the interest in the other world is more vivid. Without going at length into the causes which have brought this about, we can say in a word that it is owing to the manner in which the whole of one's life is brought under the sway of the moral principle—that is, life is viewed as constituted by the mutual relations of persons—and is filled with the power of moral passion. To

the Christian the evil world is the world that is made up of the morally bad persons and the better world is the world of the morally better people. That is, the world in which those passions and deeds which blast personal relations and destroy the sense of blessedness gives way to a world in which the passions and deeds of mutual love and kindness and purity fit men to live together without strife. The issue between the bad and the good is more vividly conceived by the Christian than by others and the division between the two worlds in respect to character is more insisted upon. Consequently, death ceases to be the dividing line. The cleavage is continued clearly beyond death, and both the evil and the good of the future world are portrayed in colors brilliant and startling. One has but to read the meditations, prayers and exhortations of the Christian centuries to see that the heaven and the hell of the Christian faith have a deeper significance for the Christian than the contrasted conditions in a world after death had for the non-Christian. Christian Creeds and Confessions of Faith, Christian sermons and hymnody furnish abundant evidence that the longing for the better world and the fear and shrinking from the worse are permanent and fundamental characteristics of the Christian outlook on life.

In all the efforts of the human imagination to depict conditions in a world that comes after this one may discern a reflection of an inherent dissatisfaction with things as they now are and a restlessness

of spirit until that which is better is found. The strivings and conflicts which men depict as occurring in the material world and which fill so large a place in their imagination of a coming world proceed from the dividedness and conflict within their own nature. So deep and distressing is the turbulency of our spirits that we carry it out into the things that surround us and forward into a world which, so far as we are concerned, is yet to be. This diremption within so profoundly impressed the thoughtful in the past that they sought its explanation in the advent into the sphere of our human life of a being utterly bad who succeeded in permeating our nature with the alien spirit of his own. With the Christian life becomes a battle. The agonies of a Paul or an Augustine, as they struggled with this inner dividedness, and the terrible denunciations of a Calvin or an Edwards, as they sought to rescue men from the slavery of sin, disclose more fully than any words of mine could do the awfulness of the issue before him who would make the better world his own. For this inner cleavage runs throughout the history of the human family. It has begotten a separation between man and man till the whole race has appeared to men like Augustine as divided into two great warring communities, the community of the evil and the community of the good, the kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God. The problem for the individual has been, how to make the transition from the one to the other, and the problem for

the community has been, how to overcome the one and make the other supreme. Here, it seems to me, lies the source not only of the inward strivings and conflicts of the man but also of the great wars between communities.

We are no longer content to be told that this struggle has been brought upon us by a sudden fall of our humanity from a blessed state in the golden age of the past and that the virus has been communicated from father to son and from age to age down to the present. Even supposing we had, as we have not, a history of the struggle from the beginning, we should still be in need of an explanation how there ever came to be a *struggle* after the fall. It is not sufficient, either, to say that the evil in conflict with the good is a survival of the animality to which man is heir. There is neither moral good nor moral evil in mere animality. In the animal you find only appetite, a dumb craving for physical satisfaction, whereas you find in the man a restlessness arising from an awareness of personal defect and often of demerit. Whether this be felt by reason of inward condition or by reason of outer circumstances, the sense of strife is there. In the Christian it takes the form clearly of a sense of disharmony between that which he now finds himself to be and that which he would be and it issues in an effort to rid himself of the one and gain the other. Without going into the matter at length, we can say that the human characteristic that stands out clearly here is the

power of idealising one's self, of discovering, so to say, one's destiny. The human spirit is possessed of prophetic power, the power to bring the future forward into the present, the power to "reach a hand through time and catch the far-off interest of tears." Therein is found an imperative that cannot be silenced. That better man which we are to be commands us to master the worse man in us. And in this, the Christian's longing for the better, there is revealed the heart of the world.

It can scarcely escape the attention of any one who is acquainted with the doctrine of human nature that is traditional in the circles of Protestant and Catholic orthodoxy that the foregoing statement runs counter to it. According to the traditionally orthodox view, the whole of mankind is turned into a "massa perditionis" through the propagation by natural generation of the evil nature—Original Sin—which supervened in man upon the first transgression. There is no need to discuss that doctrine here, but it is well to point out that, while it points rightly to the community character of human sin, it sadly perverts the truth in that it fails to perceive that the unity of the human race is constituted, not by the fact of a common physical descent, but rather by the participation, though in ever so various degrees, in a common ideal. The only way we have of knowing that there is such a thing as sin is by the human consciousness of an ideal the failure to attain to which constitutes the sin. He who awakens in men

the consciousness of the ideal awakens in them the consciousness of their sin. But this communion in sin would be meaningless and unreal were it not that it stands in contrast to the higher communion in the ideal. For the ideal is one and not many. So that the longing for personal betterment carries with it the longing for the universal betterment. Personal betterment is discoverable only in the better world. Consequently the sense of sin is persistent in the Christian heart because the hope of the better world is dominant in the Christian. For the Christian the world to come, whether it be here or elsewhere, is the better world.

The Christian vision of the future has had traditionally a two-fold character corresponding to the two sources from which its forms of representation have been historically derived. On the one hand are the representations that have been derived from the apocalypticism of the Jews and, on the other hand, are the representations derived from the metaphysical speculations of the Greeks. Christian hope and expectation have oscillated between these two poles. From the Jew came the image of a new world of men in a better earth. It would be ushered in by a cataclysm, a physical resurrection of the dead, a judgment of all mankind before the divine tribunal, the sentence of the wicked to the lower world of demons and the exaltation of the righteous to the happiness of a renovated earth. Here the better world is the reward of righteousness and it is be-

stowed on men from without by the fiat and irresistible power of God. It is not necessary that I should dwell upon the manner in which the Jewish concepts and pictures have persisted among Christians or that I should specify the variations that have appeared. The Catholic catastrophic view of death, the temporary purgatorial regions, the final judgment day, when the irreversible sentence is pronounced, and the eternal heaven and hell portray the better world as absolutely distinct and for ever separated from the evil world. In Protestantism death is even more catastrophically viewed, since purgatory is repudiated and the eternal destiny of all is irrevocably fixed at that moment. But while the picture of a final Judgment Day is retained, it loses its significance, inasmuch as the justification of the righteous and the condemnation of the wicked are both absolute and complete in the present life.

You will please notice that in all this the better world is not only a future world for men, but it is also a yonder world. Moreover, it is not only a world in which men will find themselves some day, if they are fitted for it, but it is really existent now in all its perfect goodness and perfect blessedness. Apart from that world the present world of men and their habitation are evil. Deliverance ultimately consists in making a safe transition to it from the present world. The Christian institutions are viewed as constituted for this end. So far as the present world is good, its goodness is reflected back upon it

from that other world. For that reason the Christian, as Christian, is not at home in the present world. "I'm but a stranger here, Heaven is my home." The virtues and graces he cultivates here set him in contrast to the natural ways of men. He must renounce the present world. Unworldliness is his constant and outstanding characteristic. He can endure the trials and disappointments and sorrows of the present world, since they fit him for the better world to come. For that world he longs unceasingly.

There can be no denying the claim that vast benefits have accrued to human life through this view of the future. The very vision of a world to come where perfect goodness and perfect blessedness coexist and endure for ever has served to support the effort to maintain the conviction of the rightful supremacy of goodness in the present world and to vindicate those who have labored and suffered for it. It has come as a cheering inspiration to those who seek to raise men to such a state here that after death they may fitly enter there. Their labor is not vain in the Lord. It has filled the hearts of the disappointed, bereaved, defeated and dying with solace and patient courage. And, by contrast, the horrid nightmare of the pit of hell has restrained the hand of the reckless, sobered the morally indifferent to deep concern and helped men to realize the loathsomeness of the sin that culminates in such a fate. But, on the other hand, all this seems to come by

way of inference rather than from an immediate interest in the present world or a direct estimate of good and evil here. The cultivation of the virtues that are pronounced worthy of reward tends to become infected with the spirit of the hireling. The door is always open to a disparagement, by contrast, of the common things and tasks of the present life and the negative merits of renunciation tend to displace the value of a positive consecration of all one's powers to the natural callings of life. Otherworldliness may become as serious a menace to true goodness as "worldliness."

The Christian inheritance from the Greek, in this field, stands in contrast to the inheritance from the Jew, but as respects our theme the outcome of the two is strikingly similar. The Greek thinkers who placed the stamp of their thought upon the ancient Catholic church were philosophers and metaphysicians. They conceived the meaning of the present life of man from the point of view of his cosmic relations and cosmic destiny. For them the contrast between good and evil was founded on the contrast between matter, or flesh, and spirit. The mingling of these in our world, the pressure of materiality on our spirits was the source of all our ills. When the seeming is confused with the real, the false with the true, darkness, error, corruption and death ensue. The hope of the Greek was turned to the higher world of spirit. To him that was the better world. It was the divine world, for Deity was spirit and

they who sought him must seek him in the spirit and the truth. The way of escape from this present world of darkness and error was by withdrawal of our minds from the material. Then shall we find the true light of the world and enter into it. That would be immortality.

The Graeco-Oriental understood the Christian Gospel in terms of this philosophy. Out of the failure to attain to that higher world he came through the Gospel to be able to grasp the assurance that it was now available for him. For him Jesus was a being whose true abode was in that higher world. In his life of humiliation on earth divinity had united itself to humanity and thereby imparted to it the higher potency of the life divine. In him, therefore, human nature had become really deified and now by union of their nature with his it was possible for men to rise out of this lower realm of the material, with its darkness, corruption and death, to the higher abode of perfect spirit, with its light and incorruption and immortality and to dwell there in blessedness for ever. To them the Incarnation of God in Christ became the central dogma of the Christian faith and the hope of the deification of our personal nature its governing motive. The kingdom of God was no longer the dream only of national or moral idealists or the dimly visualized image in the eye of speculative philosophy. It had become very real. Then it became legitimate to take the visions and dreams of seers to be actual perceptions of supernatural

fact. The popular belief in the coming of ministering angels from that world to ours became established as true to fact. The kingdom of heaven now became the kingdom in heaven. There and there alone was the better world. That home of the spirits of just men made perfect was the "dear, dear country" for which the longing spirits of the saints aspired.

When once the soul had gained a glimpse of that world of light and life the present world became unreal, dark, false, evil and truly irredeemable. The pathway of holiness was to be found in flight from its contaminating power. Renunciation of the world became the supreme demand, asceticism the true ideal. Contempt for the body, condemnation of the natural appetites, extinction of physical passion, self-abnegation were required of all who would begin even here to attain to the better life and live it for ever in that better world.

But in all this we have only the negative condi- of the attainment of the better life. What do all these avail if there come down to this world no positive heavenly endowments that make available to men already a participation in that better world? The response to this cry of need was found in the (Greek) mysteries, (Latin) sacraments, which are the special vehicles, indispensable media of the communication of the heavenly life to men. Christ was gone to the world above and with him was borne his deified, glorified human nature but from him had come to men by special provision the fruits of

his incarnation. That is, certain selected portions of common earthly matter were endowed with the higher, divine energy or grace, in order that man might participate in the invisible and eternal realities in visible and tangible form. Thus, while profane things remained profane and common things common, portions of the common and profane were transfused by special divine operation into a higher nature and thereby the way was opened for men to a transformation, through this same sacramental grace, into the nature of the heavenly. The present world still remained evil, I say, but by means of this exceptional action of the heavenly upon the earthly certain portions are made organic or instrumental to the transfusion of our human nature by the heavenly and divine. But this is to say that the present world in itself is doomed to remain evil and the only hope of humanity is to escape from it by translation to the better world above.

But to say that this represents the entire Roman Catholic estimate of the relation of the two worlds would be very misleading. In her actual practice a very different view comes to light. The Roman Church, in order to secure her own self-preservation, was compelled by force of circumstances to take a positive part in governing the present world. The remarkable feature about it was that the monasticising of the clergy, that is, the enforcement upon them of the ideal of world-flight, and the assumption of governing power in the world by the clergy went

on hand in hand. Each was necessitated by the other. It is true that the appearance of exercising the power of secular government and of participating in the common affairs of this world was seemingly avoided by compelling the secular authorities to do the work directly. But the sword of the church was ever suspended over the sword of the state threatening destruction to the disobedient. It is evident that, in this round-about manner, secular or present-worldly things obtained a holy or heavenly character by a kind of reflection from the higher character of that to which they were subordinated. All this was supposed to be in the interest of the church's aim to bring men to the better world above. Heaven-sent blessings or heaven-sent curses were the consequences of obedience and disobedience. There was no acknowledgment of the purpose to make this present word better for its own sake or that it had any value apart from its use as placing in the hands of the church the means of drawing the hearts of men away to the other world. The same is true of the moral requirements which were made a pre-requisite to participation in the sacraments. The sacraments were the heavenly saving gifts, they alone were actually effective and the moral demands, in so far as they were laid down, were the conditions of their efficacious ministration. At the same time, we perceive in all this the actual working of the Christian faith as a redemptive power resident in the common life of humanity and trans-

forming its character inasmuch as the whole complex of human activities, from the common personal relations of man with man up to the working of great economic and political organizations, were then brought under the influence of the moral quality of the Christian spirit, notwithstanding its perversion to priestly interests. The theory of the churchmen stood in contradiction to the facts of supreme importance. It was not the sacramental order but the moral transformation of common things that exhibited the character of the Christian faith. This was more powerfully displayed in the course of the Protestant Reformation. It is quite true, of course, that orthodox Protestantism often exhibited a kinship to Catholicism in its derogatory view of the present world. To Protestant pietists it was commonly viewed as "a waste, howling wilderness." The longing for deliverance from the materiality of the present existence, for escape from its natural ills to the blissful ease of a heaven of rest, the accentuation of the necessity of supernatural bestowments in order to overcome the natural evil into which by natural generation we were born—all these recur in Protestantism. So also was the dependence on the threat of eternal torments in a future world as a preventive of sin in the present world. Both the Catholics and the Protestants interpreted the meaning of the present life in terms of the destiny awaiting men in the life to come. After all, the holy life was there, not here.

Yet, by comparison with Catholicism, Protestantism was distinctly secular. Its repudiation of priestism and its gradual rejection of sacraments; its regard for natural institutions like marriage, the family, and the civil state; its tendency to repose all the right and power of law on the will of the common people; its exaltation of the native intelligence of men and confidence in the validity of its processes; its interest in the achievements of natural science; its nurture of economic interests—all these things indicate that Protestantism is, on the whole, a layman's faith. If Protestantism is more truly Christian than Catholicism, then the Christian way of attaining to the better world must be different from the representation of it in either orthodox Catholicism or orthodox Protestantism. It is suggested that the traditional division between the natural and the supernatural, between earth and heaven, between the realm where God lives and works and the realm in which we common men are placed can be no longer accepted. The interest in "the other world" and the interest in this present world become one and the same. Consequently, the betterment of the present world, if it is to take place, must be for its own sake and not merely for the sake of another world to which we are destined to go but which is governed by different laws from ours. Moreover, the means to be used for its betterment are not to be brought into action by a violent irruption into the normal course of nature but in the very manner in

which the good of the natural life itself is promoted. Quite in keeping with this is the conception of divine revelation which is now becoming prevalent among the more enlightened. Revelation is ceasing to be conceived of as the communication of facts which could not be known through the native processes of our spirits but only through purely miraculous channels, and the Bible is ceasing to be received as an authoritative collection of information concerning supernatural and superrational facts.

Consequently, the attempts to bring the lives of men in this world under control by appealing to the definitely known results in the after-life have lost their force in a large measure and in the more intelligent circles this kind of appeal is seldom resorted to. The effort to make men better in the present world by reference to their selfish interest in escaping from pain and gaining pleasure in another world is out of keeping with the unselfish Christian spirit and we may well doubt that, notwithstanding the common use made of it in the past, the power of betterment resident in the Christian faith is to be found in quite a different source and works in a different way. I trust that we are now at length ready to discuss it.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the immense sweep of the early Christian Gospel was owing to the rebirth of hope in a higher destiny and to the creation of a sense of higher worth in the breasts of multitudes of the lower classes. Jesus was a car-

penter and the son of a carpenter. The heavenly proclamation came first to such people as shaggy, forgotten shepherds. The first followers of the teacher were of the class of fisherman. The common people are said to have heard him gladly. Religious and moral outcasts, according to established standards, drew near to him. The explanation is offered, that he sought after them as a shepherd seeks his lost sheep and that he ate and drank with them. That is, the narratives represent him as finding the common people, both bad and good among them, attractive. Their common wants and woes, their loves and longings won his heart. He found them interesting. He believed in them and sought to be near them. To be sure, to us this reflects at first sight *his* worth rather than theirs. But it would not be a mark of worthfulness in him unless his estimate were true. He evidently saw in them in possibility the same worth of which he was conscious in himself. He was able to transmit to his followers the same estimate of mankind. The vision of Christ to their souls has become a vision of the future destiny of mankind. For he appears as man at man's best. Christianity is itself an attempt to take men at their best and not at their worst or even at their second best. Perhaps we might bring out our meaning by saying that Christianity takes men not as they are but as they are to be. It idealizes humanity. Every human being becomes thereby wonderfully attractive.

The secret of this attractiveness lies in the latent

consciousness that each of them is essential to our true selfhood. We cannot do without these sons of men. The thought of an eternal separation from them becomes overwhelmingly abhorrent. He who does not feel this is false to himself. For the longing to partake of the best another can bring to me is only the reverse side of the desire to communicate my best self to him. He cannot find himself until I give myself to him and I cannot find myself until he gives himself to me. We are mutually indispensable. This is the discovery we make in the love of Christ.

In this manner there arises in the Christian heart a longing for fellowship with each and every man in all the world and a vision of the day when mankind will be a unit in that fellowship. In other words, the world of men is by anticipation viewed as such a world that the Christian communion can become universal, all embracing. There is nothing in the lives of men which necessarily makes the vision spoken of impossible of realization, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. So says the spirit of Christian faith. This seems at superficial sight, of course, untrue to the facts. But, again, the Christian faith persists in seeing men not as they superficially are but as they are to be. Consequently it sees in the weakest and worst those hidden potentialities for the better which a higher fellowship, created by the self-giving of the members of the Christian community to those who are not yet members of

that community, will bring to fruition, so that men may come to their true selves. That is to say, the meaning of the present world of men comes to light in the Christian communion.

It is plain, then, that the better world which is in the making by the Christian faith is to be viewed as consisting not merely of a part of the human family. It does not permit a permanent diremption in our universal human consciousness but views it as an antithesis to be overcome. The "saved" cannot do without the "unsaved." Not by a fear of contamination through contact with the world of men and a cowardly flight from the foe but by a fearless and loving association with men everywhere, as they pursue their secular tasks, are the disciples of Jesus Christ to find their haven of safety and their heaven of rest.

Consider for a moment the character of the Christian communion as it appears in a local community that we call a church. The significant thing about such a local union is that it is made possible by the hearty recognition, on the part of each, of a participation in the divine love by the others. The power that has brought them individually into the fellowship of the love of God as it is seen in Christ binds them together in mutual regard and goodwill. Each is elevated in the esteem of the others by recognizing his own worth in the worth of the others. The many contingencies of life through which all must pass make test of the strength of this bond of union and

in this manner there arise in them all the virtues and graces of kindness, sympathy, forbearance, forgiveness and such like, without which the aim to establish and sustain the communion must remain unfulfilled. Mark you, it is not by seeking seclusion that these graces and virtues arise in all but, on the contrary, it is only in the common secular things of life they are summoned forth. Here is the better world already in the making.

Moreover, the high Christian estimate of all men leads on to the practical purpose of extending this communion throughout the world until it become universal. Here arises the imperative to wage war with those forces that would impede the execution of this purpose and that threaten the communion with destruction. The purpose to make this communion absolutely supreme becomes a basis of common action. In this manner there arises a definite community based upon that mutual recognition of the fellowship that constitutes the communion. Contact with other institutions that are not based on the clear recognition of the worth of the principle constitutive of this communion begets the conflicts and struggles which form so large an element in the history of human progress. It is in connection with these conditions that there are developed the virtues of foresight, courage, consecration, endeavor, self-sacrifice, watchfulness, self-mastery, determination, preseverance. Only in the exercise of these qualities can there be any solid confidence in the

ability to conquer the world. Observe, at the same time, that these virtues and graces which arise within the Christian community as the outcome of its purpose to extend itself over all the world are just the qualities which are in daily requisition in the performance of the most commonplace tasks of common life.

Observe, in the next place, that the Christian estimate of the worth of every man carries with it the judgment that the world of mankind is such a world that the Christian communion is capable of becoming ecumenical, all-embracing. This is but another way of saying that the natural relations of men to one another, according to the very constitution of men, are to be viewed as preparing them to become recipients of the grace that makes them members of this communion. The meaning of the common life of the present world of men comes to light in the Christian communion. The secular life ceases to be profane and unholy. Separation from it, flight from it, so far from aiding in the pursuit of the better life, separates one from the conditions under which the better life can be normally developed. To put the same thought in terms more distinctly theological—the attitude of God toward the Christian communion of love exhibits his attitude toward the entire human race.

The progress of this communion in the world and of the communities that spring out of it, in so far as they express its character or embody its spirit,

is to be regarded as exhibiting the purpose and method of the divine government of the human family. Hence the clue to the meaning of the history of humanity, from its earliest beginnings down to the present, is to be found in the purpose that is being wrought out in the history of the Christian communion. This inspiring conception of human history was first set forth broadly, as far as my knowledge goes, by the great Augustine in his City of God. The thesis of that great work is to be re-affirmed today again, though without those limitations and that warp of thought that arose from his self-forced subjection to the Catholic Church. That is to say: The execution of the divine judgments throughout the ages, as they progressively sever the evil from the good, is to be viewed as manifesting the divine mode of preserving the Christian community from the power of destruction from without and from within and as vindicative of the will to make the Christian communion universal. This manifestation of divine righteousness is the actual progressive realization, in the course of history, of the perfect good God has purposed for all mankind. His government of the world becomes a fulfillment of his holy love as it is seen in the Christian communion.

Let me observe, in the third place, that this enables us to draw a helpful inference as respects the relation of the natural institutions of men, such as the family, the school, the civil state and the

economic order to the making of the better world. If what I have said about the character of the Christian communion as throwing light upon the character of the forces that are in actual operation toward the making of the better world be true, then these institutions are to be viewed as operative in the same direction. It is, of course, impossible for us to show this in detail at the present time and it may very well be that it can never be strictly proven, but we have, at any rate, a point of view from which these may be discovered to have a significance common to them all. All those modes of contemplating humanity which make human history atomistic and chaotic or even disruptive of an original unity of the race; or those which discover its secret in a control by miraculous interference from without; or those again, which postulate a dual purpose and a dual method within the life of the race; or, once more, those which seek to determine the meaning of human history by means of a knowledge of the cosmos apart from man, are hereby set aside. The diremption of humanity from humanity or of humanity from the universe is cancelled and the whole institutional life of men rises up as a progressive revelation of the manner in which the individual man comes to himself in a perfect communion of all with all.

This, I beg you to notice, is a very different thing from saying that the whole life of the Christian communion and the whole sum of its saving energy

among men are to be held within the limits of a single organization or order. Nor is it even to say that it is necessary that there be any permanent organization whatsoever of the forces of the Christian communion as a separate institution. Far from it! On the contrary, it takes the natural institutions of men of which we have spoken and sees, the rather, in *them* the moulds in which this higher spiritual force is to find its most effective mode of action. These are to become the organs of the higher life and *they* are to have the higher character which the church has been in the habit of claiming for itself. We do not leave them or seek some foreign kind of order with a view to the realization of the hope of the better world of which we are speaking. On the contrary, these are to become the organs of the higher life and they are to possess the higher character which the church as an institution has been in the habit of claiming for itself exclusively. The native sphere of the operation of the Christian spirit is in the forms of the community-life native to humanity. There we find our better world in the making and if we find it not there we find it nowhere. For the most truly human—that is the most truly Christian, and the higher natural is the true supernatural.

To resume in brief:—The supremacy of Jesus Christ among men, the perfection of personality in him, lies not in a self-containedness, a self-sufficiency on his part apart from the character and worth of

any or all the individuals constituting the race of man, but in his realization of the indispensability of himself to the race and the indispensability of the whole race to himself. Men have seen in him, as he fulfils himself progressively in the lives of those who have caught the significance of his personality, a quality and range of life in which they may all be at last at home with one another. In this way the natural forms of the community-life of men take on progressively a Christian character because apart from them the spirit of Jesus Christ would be destitute of the organs essential to its self-expression and self-fulfillment. We can no longer be content to say that the better life is or may be here because it is yonder but rather that the better life must be yonder in the life to come because it is already here.

CHAPTER IV.

LECTURE IV. THE POWER OF COSMIC INTERPRETATION

IN the outline of an interpretation of the Christian faith which we have been attempting to present in these lectures we have reached the point of saying that its genius is exhibited in its creation of a moral world governed by the personality discovered in Jesus Christ and therefore becoming unceasingly better. A careful study of the history of mankind since he came and especially of those regions in which the Christian Gospel has found a home is confirmatory of our conviction. But some of our most serious questionings begin at this point. "Granted," it will be said, "that what you have said is true, it may not carry us very far. Tell us if you please, what is to become of this better world in the end. For a world in the abstract, such as you have been speaking of, does not concern us very deeply, except in the matter of abstract thinking. Our world is a concrete world, made up of people whose lives are very strictly conditioned by the limitations of a physical world in which each one of them lives and has his being. Their interest in this physical world

is very direct because they are dependent on it for every good they seek, including even the spiritual. Each one of them has to pass out of this world ere long, so far as we, with our limited vision, can see. What is his destiny? What becomes of him then? His participation in this better world of which you have been speaking does not lessen but rather deepens his concern with what becomes of people after death. Has your Christian faith anything more than guesses to offer in reply?"

The question, we all know, is age-long and thousands of times an answer has been attempted. The interest is not always maintained at the same level but rises and falls with the kind and degree of pressure on our spirits in age after age and in different peoples. But it will never down. A Christian teacher may be rightfully expected to have something to say on the subject for the special reason that the Christian religion has so often been represented as fixing the hearts of men on a world into which they pass at death. Christians have been supposed to have in their possession a revelation from another world giving to men a positive knowledge of that life beyond and of the way to reach it blissfully. This indeed has often been supposed to constitute its principal message. It has been held to be a religion of the other world. And there are times when men feel very keenly that it must be such if it is to continue to be the comforter of the heavy-laden multitudes of this world. At the present

day, as our hearts turn to those graves in Flanders' Field, an agonizing cry goes up for some assurance that, if a man die, he shall live again. Is there a place in the universe whither our dear ones go when they die? It is a cosmic question and its answer involves an interpretation of the cosmos. Has our Christianity something of a satisfying nature to say to those hosts of intelligent people who are quite aware today of the magnitude of the task lying before him who would offer a religious interpretation of the cosmos?

I am fairly familiar with the doctrines that Christian people in the past held concerning the future life and have elsewhere offered a study of it. I feel that we are far from being able to content ourselves with simply repeating the statements our fathers made on this subject. A change in our mode of approach to the problem has been forced upon us of late and that for two reasons. In the first place, we have been forced to a change in our views as to what is meant by a *revelation* and of the manner in which it is received. Increasing numbers of intelligent people, particularly those who have lived through a college curriculum, have come to feel that no man is competent to say that we have positively authenticated information about the future life or the world beyond. In the second place, the progress of modern science, with its seemingly sure tread, has tended to produce an unshakeable conviction that there is a universe either made or in the making—

and for our purposes today it makes little difference, so far as I can see, which you say—and that the traditional division of existence into two worlds can be only temporary. We must assume all the worlds to be a cosmos, an ordered unity if we would interpret anything. Consequently, any interpretation of life that makes the universe finally dual is bound to pass away. It would seem also that the way of access to be cosmos, an ordered unity, if we would inter- of access to a true knowledge of the world to come, if we may for a moment make reference to this temporary division, must be one and the same. The two reasons assigned for the change become one.

It may seem, therefore, at first glance, as if the methods and assumptions of modern scientific investigation, with their wide acceptance in the schools where our young people are being trained to think, had rendered a disservice to religion. That it has rendered a service to our intellect is pretty certain. Our emotional experiences have probably profited also. Even our morals have been preserved from a distressing dualism. But when it comes to religion, many anxiously ask whether its hopes have not been dissipated like a beautiful but illusive mirage.

It is, of course, quite out of the question for us to deal adequately with this great issue in a single lecture. A hint or two which, I trust, may be fruitful in the effort to answer the questions propounded is the best that can be offered here.

We are to remember that this is assuredly a ques-

tion concerning the cosmos. Certain able and famous thinkers of our times have sought to separate religious questions entirely from metaphysical or cosmical questions, in the supposed interest of religion. They have sought to establish a way of arriving at religious certainty in the midst of metaphysical uncertainty. It seems to me that such certainty must be of a very temporary and timid kind. It may easily revert into the most chaotic uncertainty if it reposes, as it seems to do, on a diremption in man's nature, like the diremption men used to make in the universe. It is very noteworthy also that the history of human religions shows that, from the rudest beginnings of them known to us up to the most highly cultured of them, the religions of men have been associated with an interpretation of the cosmos. To me it seems inevitable that they should always be. Therefore this easy way which the Ritshlian school would fain hold open is not for us to take.

I should like to put the question not in the form: Can the Christian hope of a better world for all eternity be still held, notwithstanding the modern view of the cosmos? but in the form, whether the modern view of the cosmos does not offer an extraordinary opportunity to Christian teachers to exhibit the supreme worth of the Christian hope? Can Christian faith put upon the cosmos an interpretation that must be the true basis of any real interpretation whatsoever? Is the Christian faith creative of a power of cosmic interpretation?

To answer these questions let us turn for a moment, if we may, to consider how any interpretation whatsoever of the world arises. To do this we may make a distinction between the conscious and purposed interpretation of the universe which a philosopher seeks as his peculiar task and the, almost, unconscious interpretation of it which the ordinary man makes constantly. The latter's interpretation is only implied in what he says and does generally, and it does not come distinctly before his mind until some one raises the question. It may very well be, then, that the man is doing and saying constantly certain things which he could never do were there not a latent view of the physical world in his mind which only comes to light when he tries to give some reason for what he has done. Now, the question before us is this: Does the Christian man, just because he is a Christian, become possessed of a power to find a meaning in the universe which it could not have but for the Christian faith? May we expect, therefore, that the Christian cosmic philosophy will ultimately surpass and subordinate all others?

To make my point clear permit me to refer to a homely event that happened some years ago. I was digging one day in a mound that stood in front of my summer cottage and presently there fell out of a heap of mould that my shovel turned over three very crude stone implements or weapons. An examination of them carried me in imagination back to

ancient and simple times when the modern mechanical achievements of man were not dreamed of. But here was a beginning. Some savage had taken a piece of flat hard stone and, by rubbing it against another piece or some other hard thing, had smoothed the end of one or the side of another so as to form a kind of edge that might enable him to cut something with it. What had that man really accomplished when he did this? Well, in the first place, he had turned himself into an artisan or an artist or both. In fact a true artisan is always something of an artist and a true artist is always something of an artisan. The ancient artisan turned a piece of material to a use it could never have served but for him. He had found a new use in dead inanimate stone. Millions of ages might pass but, unless one such as he had intervened, the stone would remain as it was and the end which it was made capable of serving would never be disclosed. As it is now, he also finds himself possessed of a power he never had before. With that crude weapon he can now skin a beast or hollow out a piece of wood that will serve a purpose that has been hitherto beyond it. The whole story of economic and industrial advance begins here. This is the starting-point of what we call civilization. As it progresses, the earth comes to produce for human wants a supply it could never have offered but for him. And the extent to which this may go on is unlimited.

What, then, has our crude artisan found? For

one thing, he has found that he is able to use a part of what we call nature which was not previously available for his own ease or comfort. To a part of nature, at least, he is for the time superior. He is no longer on a level with that which has now become his instrument. It is a far cry from this modest achievement and discovery to the mastery of nature as a whole, but the important point is that he has made a beginning of an undertaking which will continually advance but has no end in sight. He begins to be a kind of magician wresting from nature favors which she would never have granted of herself but which she seems bound to yield on his demand. So far for the new relation to the world of nature. But he also stands now on a higher plane of life than those other men who have never got his secret. They, like the animals must still wait on nature's convenience. They have no power to make her give forth more than is her wont. If there be a shortage they, like the beasts that bask and batten in the woods, must struggle against the beasts with tooth and claw for their due share. *He* is the superman. He can dispense favors to other men. They are now in a relation of dependence on him.

The main point I wish to make here is that our artisan has inadvertently put a new interpretation upon nature. We cannot claim that he has as yet thought it out in any degree but in course of time he finds out the meaning of his deed. He will hence-

forth think of himself and of the world about him differently. He has the power to think in this way because he has the power to do the deed referred to. He finds that it is through him nature gets its new meaning. He has stamped the character of his mind upon it. He has made it what it was not and could not have been without him. His action is interpretative because it is creative. More and more he finds that he cannot place himself in the same category with the things he is using. He has risen to a new pre-eminence in relation to the cosmos and therewith has gained the power of a new cosmic interpretation.

One thing, therefore, we have discovered in this little excursion into the life of the savage, namely, that a human interpretation of the cosmos is something more than a product of mere intellectuality. Men do not succeed in wresting its secret from the universe by examining it from without and, by the application of self-sufficient rationality, setting free its hidden meaning. We must first put into the world that which we afterwards extract from it. We get from it again our own self transfused through having been immersed in its depths. The new world-interpretation is a new self-interpretation. Or putting it conversely—the world becomes a different world to us in its meaning, because we have put into it a hidden quality of our selfhood which was not there for us before we put it there.

Of course, it may be said that the world is what

it is, no matter what we may be or may think it to be, and that the interpretations of it that come from transferring to it the qualities of our selfhood are artificial and arbitrary. But let us not be too sure that this is so. For, not only do we find it possible for us to carry the qualities of our inner self out in action within the world as if it were meant to be the organ of our personality but we, in our very selfhood, grow up in the world and find the framework of our being coming to us from it. If, then, we place upon the world the meaning we find in ourselves, are we doing violence to it? On the contrary, we may be only showing that it comes to its true self in us and by us.

Let us linger a little longer with our primitive man who has made a tool for his own use out of a dead, unshapen piece of rock. For the suggestion his achievement gives us is of crucial importance to our argument. The savage has hereby altered the direction of his life's activities and discovered a new realm of human knowledge. He has begun to be an artisan. That is, he has begun to manipulate the mechanical forces of nature in his own interest. He has entered on the experience of exercising a personal control of nature's forces. Hence he begins thinking of nature as never before. The intellectual process of discovering and organizing her mechanical forces has begun. He is a mechanic and he sees the world with the eyes of the mechanic. The way has been opened to interpret the universe as one vast

mechanism and to trace its origin to the purposes of a great Master Mechanic. The new power of which the man has discovered himself to be possessed carries with it the exercise of a new cosmic interpretation.

Our enterprising savage has also begun, or soon will begin, to be an artist as well as artisan. He admires his work. He finds himself inclined to preserve it not merely as an instrument for getting what he wants to satisfy his physical needs but simply as something that he has made for his pleasure. In course of time he does many such things. These acts become pleasurable as well as useful, and pleasurable even when they do not appear useful. The articles he has made fit his feelings. A sentiment of beauty arises within him and its force and range of application gradually extend. From feeling a beauty in what he has made he comes to feel a beauty in things which he has not made but which stand there before him already made. That is to say, the world is, for him, capable of being physically made beautiful and then mentally construed as beautiful. Thence the way is open to see in the cosmos a work of art. The artist has reached an interpretation of the universe not open to any one who is no artist. By bringing into exercise a hidden power in his own nature he has disclosed a new meaning in the cosmos. That is, the world has become in possibility for him a true cosmos, an all-embracing Beautiful. The world maker may well have been an Infinite Archi-

tect of Beauty, the perfect Artist. Nobody but the true artist understands His work.

Our savage who has become both artist and artisan has also introduced a new sense of relation to other men. He is not only able to appropriate to himself more of nature than hitherto, but he has also discovered to other men what they may do. In this way he has founded civilization. For he has discovered to men a way of communicating with each other not open to anything less than man. Unassisted nature could never have done what she is doing now but, by the intervention of his genius, connections of a new and powerful kind are established among men. Men cease to be flocks and herds and droves and they become a society. Inner bonds of a kind found nowhere else are cemented between them. Social customs and maxims arise. Morality is born. The material instruments by which the members of a human society are bound together are turned into instruments for the realization of moral purposes. Thence the way lies open to the task of seeing in the whole universe a medium for the fulfilment of the moral life. The universe has a moral significance. The man has summoned the moral in himself into conscious action and has found it possible to transfer to the cosmos the moral quality he has discovered in himself. The ethical interpretation of the cosmos is an achievement of the human will and not of the intellect solely.

I hope that these illustrations of my thesis enable

us now to make a step in the direction the title of this lecture suggests. That is, I hope to be able to show that in the practice of the religious life men enter upon the task of interpreting the universe in a way that would not be open to them but for the exercise of that kind of activity we call religion. I mean that the religious man as such can not be contented with an interpretation of the universe that comes to him independently of his personal religious life. He cannot simply take over an interpretation that has come from another source and adjust his religion to it. It is quite misleading to say that the world is whatever it is, no matter what one's religion may be. For, just as a crude mechanical invention sets a man on the track of turning the whole world into a mechanism; as the making of a thing that pleases apart from any other use it may have sets a man on the track of turning the whole world into a revelation of beauty; and as also the entrance upon a moral relation with other men sets a man on the track of making the whole world into a moral system; similarly, the entrance upon a religious experience sets him upon the task of giving a religious meaning to the universe.

No man has as yet succeeded in perfecting any such achievement as is here suggested. The mechanical progress of men is very admirable and every fresh advance in this direction makes the vista before them more inviting, but whether or no the world is really a vast mechanism it is too soon for any one

to declare as a known fact. We can only say that the prospect of making it out to be so is increasingly encouraging. Whether or no the universe is truly beautiful as a whole we do not yet know assuredly, but the constantly increasing productivity of the beauty-making power of humanity is a very strong encouragement to him who fain would believe that the universe is so constituted that in its wholeness it awakens the sentiment of beauty in the human soul that conceives it as a whole. Men have hoped that the world is morally constituted and they have sought to construe its changes as sanctions of the moral law. But very often their constructions have been very faulty and in all instances the portion of events that has admitted definitely such a construction is very small indeed in comparison with that vast portion that seems to ignore moral considerations and to defy the attempts of the moralist to regard the whole as constituting a moral system or as supporting such a system. All we can say is, that every fresh moral advance drives us on more determinedly to essay the attempt and heightens our courage as we face the hard wall of forces in the world that are seemingly neutral morally. So too, we may find that religion only sets us at the task of turning the world into a sanctuary of worship and leads us daily onward to survey the whole in this light; but, to answer the question whether the whole is fitted to awaken and permanently sustain the religious capacities of our nature remains as yet an uncom-

pleted task. The question is, what does religion do for the interpretation of the cosmos and what particularly does Christianity do in this regard? To answer this question we must turn our attention once more for a moment to the beginnings of human spiritual activity or, at least, to what seems its beginnings, and thence indicate the direction it has principally taken in later periods.

It has already been pointed out that the knowledge that has been gained of primitive times makes it pretty clear that science and religion had originally a common root. Both sprang, on the one hand, from the sense of benefit or harm that came to men from happenings in the world about them and, on the other hand, from the desire to control the working of the forces hidden there so as to secure good things and avoid the evil. To men of these remote ages the world was in a large degree a sort of disintegrated and haphazard juxtaposition of things, a reflex of their own irregular thinking and unordered lives.

In the later times, when the higher reaches of the human spirit brought a whole of things, as it seemed, within the survey of men and they grasped it as a unity of some sort, two divergent judgments were passed upon it. Men either saw in the dark materiality of existence a threatened inhibition of their desires to reach out to better things or else they perceived in it a power or powers working for their good. The world has always had for men some kind of religious significance. They have either

feared or loved it, or they have both feared and loved it, but in no case have they been able to feel indifferent toward it. In the religions of men their estimate of the world is especially manifest.

In all religions there is implicit, at least, a cosmic philosophy. In Buddhism, for example, or in certain types of mediaeval Catholic mysticism our human connection with material existence constituted an obstacle to the fulfilment to the hopes of the pious. But this, so far from diverting their attention from the cosmos, as a thing of no account or as to be shunned because of its repugnance to their aims, really drew their attention to it. The world threw itself persistently on their attention as that which by its very oppositional character stimulated their desire to explain it. "Otherworldliness" always requires for its vindication a theory of the present world. On the other hand, in Judaism and Protestant Christianity, where the world is conceived as having some positive relation to one's good, the imperative to interpret it is felt even more strongly because the better life would seem to be reached along its highways. The Protestant spirit shrinks not from the attempt to discover the ultimate secret of the universe but plunges boldly into its most forbidding regions, confident that the knowledge of the truth of the world is open to all and must minister in the end to the good of all. Religion, we see, has always a cosmic interest, not as a matter of supererogation, but as inherent in its very life.

Now, it is commonly admitted that religion is full of passion, whether it be the deep and quiet contemplativeness that by its steady flow and pressure subdues all vagrant feeling and thrusts a man forward into severe spiritual conflicts which he must fight out all alone; or whether it be at the other extreme where the fierceness of its fire breaks out in fanaticism and intolerance; or whether, again, it be in the more common ground between these extremes. But, in any case, all those passions that play so powerful a part in our common human relations, such as courtship, marriage, family life, economic endeavor and politics, are taken up into the religious experiences of the people. In fact, the manner in which a man's religion is related to these things gives the best clue to its character. But in science we seem, at first glance, to see something quite the opposite. Is it not granted that the methods of science and its inductions can be trusted only when all the play of personal interest is rigidly excluded from influencing the course of investigation and its outcome? It would seem that the motives and methods of science, on the one hand, and the motives and methods of religion, on the other, are so disparate that conflicts between them become inevitable. And may not that conflict issue in the destruction of the one or the other of them? Such a conclusion does not seem to me justifiable. It rises from a habit of overlooking the self-imposed limitations under which science is working.

Science has become to us the sciences. Each science concerns itself with a detached portion of existence and not with the whole of existence as a unity. The interpretation of this ultimate unity has become the task of philosophy. Every special science detaches a certain portion or field of the whole area or complex of facts, the others being regarded as temporarily negligible, and by a collation and ordering of the materials found within this field, reaches, presumably, certain inductions and inferences. This temporary detachment of portions of the area of knowledge is necessary, if any progress is to be made. But every man of science knows quite well that the results reached in this manner must be checked up in relation to the results obtained by a similar detachment of other portions and that the whole must ultimately constitute a unity. If contradiction arises, there is error somewhere. And just as he detaches a portion of the material and places the remainder for the time, in abstraction, so also he brings to play upon this material, not the whole of the capacities of his nature—not all its impulses, passions, intuitions and longings—but only those capacities which by detachment from the others enable him to take up and execute this special task of making a definite induction within a limited area. The whole man, so to say, is not engaged in that scientific pursuit but only those powers of his nature which seem particularly fitted to it. If the others were all allowed free play at the time and in

that particular field, confusion and uncertainty would result. But the broad-minded man—who is always more than man of science—is quite aware that all those qualities and powers of his nature which were, for a time, set in abstraction must be called back again and their united action given full play if life is to be lived in its fulness. Ultimate truth cannot be attained by the disruption of our humanity but only by its unity. Those very passions and impulses, those very hopes and longings which any particular science seeks temporarily to ignore, remain unextinguished and must reassert themselves in due time. Indeed, we may very rightly contend that in a sort of half-conscious way they *were* operative in the pursuit of the purely scientific knowledge and that, but for them, the task would never have been undertaken or, having been undertaken, would never have come to completion.

If for a long time this was not clear to the mind of the student of science the situation is now rapidly changing. For new scientific discoveries are quickly put to some practical use and the pressure of practical needs is constantly inciting the scientific investigator on to new achievements. Even apart from this we can affirm that the man of science is constantly beckoned onward by the vision of communities of men sharing the joy of his coming discovery or, even at its lowest, the vision of his own more perfect state when he will have enlarged the sphere of his action so as to have become the denizen of a larger

and, from some point of view, better universe. The image of the more perfect personality is ever before his mind and but for this his zeal would fade and perish in indifference and sloth. He may have never analyzed his motives or taken the pains speculatively to construe their meaning, but if he will do so, he will find no stopping place short of that supreme regard for personality which is the soul of the religious life.

That is to say, the scientific man is also religious and his scientific purposes repose on religious motives.

If what I have been saying is true, we have, in the final reckoning, no barely theoretical interest in the world in which we live. It is only by the temporary abstraction of the higher interest that the purely theoretical interest can ever be given a place. It is not open to us to regard any man's final interpretation of the cosmos as wholly an outcome of a careful discovery and collation of purely objective facts and a calm, dispassionate and disinterested construction of their interrelations. On the contrary, his cosmical interpretations will be found to flow from and to express the same deep personal longings and purposes as he manifests in the vocation he practices, the pleasures he pursues and the personal friendships and hatreds he cherishes. In every instance there will stand disclosed his *appreciation* of the universe as the great complex of facts and forces in the midst of which he is to seek those achieve-

ments or attain those ends that constitute his life as a man. The universe becomes *his* universe. Between its character and his character there is always a certain correspondence. His personal attainments impart to the universe a character it could never have had but for him. Even if one were to say that he does not know whether or no there be a universe, yet the very attempt he is constantly making to answer the question of its existence discloses the motive of his endeavor, namely, the aim of achieving an inner unity. For this inner unity is impossible of realization apart from the unity of all existence, that is, a universe.

We have now reached the crux of our problem in the present lecture: Does Christianity as a religious faith bring to its votaries a power of cosmic interpretation not to be found otherwise or elsewhere and, if so, what is this distinctively Christian insight into the meaning of this world which we call a cosmos? I feel that the inevitable brevity of our discussion makes it possible for us to give only a hint of answer to this question and that the answer must bear a somewhat dogmatical stamp. The outstanding characteristics of the Christian religion as adumbrated in our preceding lectures shall be the basis of the treatment of the present subject.

In the discussion of the creative activity of the Christian spirit as it is seen at work in the discovery of the perfect personality we have seen that this perfect personality is visualized progressively as one,

by the enlistment and unified direction of his powers, comes to the realization of his own selfhood. The discovery of that Perfect One is an achievement. But at the same time, to speak in the language of religion, it is a revelation. In the devotion of our energies to the higher end we are aware that we are the subjects of the power of that higher personality. He makes us what we are. We have also seen in our study of the making of the better world that the creative activity of the Christian spirit is manifested in the way of an impartation of one's self to other men and that, as we proceed on our way to the fulfillment of this task of recreating other men in our likeness, there is no limit that can be set for us short of filling the whole world with our own higher worth. Yet, throughout this whole process of self-giving, the Christian is aware that the others are as indispensable to him as he to them. He must have them all in communion with himself, he must ever receive of them into his inmost self, for without them he can never become the man he wills to be. It is this illimitable community of men that is to make of him the man he is to be.

At the same time it is to be noted that the community life of men does not arise in independence of the forces of the material universe or by the purely immediate relation of human persons with one another after the mystical order. On the contrary, we know of no fellowship of men with one another which is not mediated by physical forms. The

character of that fellowship has always a correspondence with the action of the material environment. Thus the communication of the higher life from one man to another is to be construed as effectuated through the cooperation of the human spirit with the action of the material order in which it has its habitat. Men are the subjects of the working of that order at the same time that they use it as their instrument. In the Christian faith this cooperative action is comprehended in its unity as an act of God himself acting upon our spirits.

That is to say, in the attempt to set forth the creativity of the Christian faith the active and the receptive sides of our nature are brought together. In the Christian religion they are seen in equipoise. On the one side, we have seen that the Christian faith summons the active forces of our nature to their highest possible development. It contains the great "I WILL" of the human spirit. Its watchwords are consecration, self-devotion. It begets in men unparalleled ambition, determination to fulfill one's self to the utmost, intolerance of self-effacement. It produces a self-affirmation unquenchable. No sooner is one goal attained than there appears another goal that needs for its attainment a mightier force than ever. Wherever this faith may go its productivity is evident in all the spheres of life—social, economic, intellectual, moral. The Christian is continually discovering in himself powers undreamt of before. He seeks no Elysium of

ease but a heaven of conquest. He can never be content to be only himself but must ever become more than himself.

But in and with this assertiveness of soul—not prior or subsequent to it, but coactive with it—there is an attitude of perfect receptivity. That ultimate to which he aspires arises, it is true, out of the creativity of his own spirit but at the same time it is that which makes him what he is. That better world which is to come into being through his effort is by its very forthcoming producing in him that betterment which he seeks to impart to mankind. And thus, at the very moment when we Christians are bringing the whole body of our concentrated energies into an action that exhausts their strength —at that very moment, I say, we are the most fully receptive. The classical expression of it is the Pauline: "I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the grace of God that was with me." "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you." Thus self-assertion does not become arrogance, nor submission become indifference. Initiative does not become recklessness nor trust, quiescence. Free action does not become lawlessness nor obedience, self-contempt.

The contrast with Judaism and Buddhism, for example, with their separation between that which man does and that which is done for him, is evident. In Judaism, the "I will" of God

and the "I will" of man are successive in the order of time and contingent on one another, so that the tendency is to make of God a commanding and irresistible Will to which man must submit in utter helplessness. In Buddhism, on the contrary, there is an exclusion of any redeeming or uplifting power and reliance is placed on the concentrated will of the man unsustained by a higher Will. But in Christianity the two sides of our nature are perfected in their unity. In the fullest affirmation of the meaning and worth of our own personality there are the blessedness and peace that come from being subject to the projection of the higher personality into ours. In all this a certain attitude toward the cosmos, an implicit interpretation of it, comes to light. We must now attempt to indicate by way of suggestion what this may be.

We have seen that, to us Christians, Jesus appears as the Perfect Personality. His title to this high honor rests not on his freedom, or exemption, from the physical and spiritual conditions under which our common lives must be lived but on the quality of spirit he manifested and set in circulation among men. Outwardly viewed, the circumstances of his life were far from ideal. The child of a disappointed, defeated and subject people; nurtured in the midst of social conditions that were dominated by the influence of a selfish oligarchy, on the one hand, and an intolerant hierarchy, on the other; with the sight of the suffering that filth and disease,

poverty and hunger always bring to mortal men continually before his eyes; himself impeded in his work, persecuted, arrested and gibbeted through official jealousy and obsequiency and through popular madness. The forces of malignity and the powers of the cosmos seemed allied against him. In striking contrast to all this is the kindly way in which he had formerly looked upon that which we call "nature." To him the natural had not been synonymous with the hard and evil and unfeeling but was instinct with the beauty and goodness that filled his own soul. Perchance some one may feel inclined to say that these qualities could not be found in nature itself but that he reflected them upon it from his own soul and thus put into nature a meaning that was quite contrary to its real character. Be that as it may, the contradiction between his love of life and the way in which the forces of material nature were used against him to crush out his life is evident enough on the surface. It is no wonder that the evangelist in relating the story of his death said that a darkness came over all the earth when he died.

Yet in the face of all this we can confidently affirm that the chief source of Jesus' attractiveness lies in his crucifixion and the way he went to it. It is the spectacle of the Crucified upon his cross and his cry of mingled desolation, forgiveness, confidence and triumph that has broken the hearts of men and subdued them to the power of his grace—not the spectacle of his reigning in glory with his

foes beneath his feet. It has seemed to men the tragedy of tragedies to witness the reduction of all the graces and virtues, the hopes and longings of all mankind to shame and spitting and death. Why should tragedy possess that mighty attractiveness which it undoubtedly has for us all unless it be that through nothing less can the true nobility of perfect manhood come to light? Jesus' true selfhood came to light thereby, and that not to *our* sight alone but to his own most truly. When his disciples, in consequence of it, declared that they saw him seated afterwards on the right hand of the Majesty on High, what was it but their way of affirming that the supremacy of his personality came to realization by the cross? The forces that combined to accomplish his seeming overthrow became the ladder set up on earth by which men ascend to heaven.

Therewith is assigned to the believer in Jesus the task of reinterpreting the whole cosmos in accordance with the significance of this achievement of the Master. Science, in forcing us to the recognition of the unity of all worlds compels us to see that if any portion of the universe or any event in its normal course has a moral or religious meaning it is because the whole has such a meaning. It has compelled us, so to say, to dismiss isolated miracles to make room for one single, all-embracing miracle. Christianity says that this miracle must be a miracle of good and not of evil.

The prospect of wresting from the universe a

message of goodwill and of the uplifting power of goodness seems, it is true, a forbidding one. In the words of John Stuart Mill: "Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyr, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them with the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabi or a Domitian never surpassed. All this Nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and of justice."

This terrible indictment sets forth all too plainly the fearsome and shrinking attitude toward nature assumed by multitudes in other ages and even in our own. The human response to nature's challenge has taken many forms, from the dogged stubbornness of the Stoic and the assumed contempt for the world on the part of the mediaeval mystic to the utter hopelessness of the Buddhist, except that the latter holds that, by the extinction of desire, annihilation of existence may be attained. Even the Protestant Kant felt that the realm of nature and the moral realm were not inwardly connected. To him they seemed subject to different laws and their manifestations were of a divergent character. He found himself obliged to postulate—for he felt he could not prove—the existence of God in order to reconcile these two worlds. But this still left the natural

world an alien, if not a foe, to our moral nature.

If now, in contrast to all this, the Christian can possess his soul in peace and live his life in fulness of joyful strength, since he sees in Nature a friend to his higher purposes, it must be because, together with his ampler knowledge of the world's forces and operations, he unites a quality of inner life of his own that enables him to bring to the world-problem a power of interpretation unknown to others.

His interpretation of the cosmos comes to him as the only satisfactory explanation of his own achievement. He has faced the terrible foes lurking in Nature, "red in tooth and claw," and found them in the end to be his friends. The seemingly pitiless powers that have afflicted him with pains and sickness, penalties and losses, bereavements and sorrows, and even the certainty of the arrival of swift-approaching death to himself and to all that he holds dear have disclosed their kindlier side to him. Even when his whole career in life seems to have marked him out to be an innocent sufferer for others' misdoings or to be suffering, it would seem, meaninglessly at the hands of a Universe that pays not the slightest regard to his longing for relief, he finds in the end that his very misfortunes have turned out to be the indispensable means to the better life that has come to him. He has been able to turn the miseries and terrors with which Nature has visited men into smiling friends. He glories in tribulation, for tribulation works patience, and

patience probation, and probation hope, and hope makes not ashamed because in the midst of these things the love of God has been shed abroad in his heart through Christ Jesus. He knows no other way by which this love could come to his heart, than by the road of trial. To be sure, he has not gone very far in his exploration of Nature's secrets. He has surveyed only a very little of the illimitable regions of life that lie before men. But, having begun, he can find no stopping place. And the discoveries he has made in this spiritual enterprise must be the basis—just as it is in all science—of all further explorations. The world that has been evil to other men he is making over into a good world. If the cosmos is an ultimate unity he may well believe that his task can be accomplished.

Just as he who creates a mechanical instrument out of an unordered mass of dead matter finds himself warranted thereby in turning the whole world into a mechanism subservient to a personal purpose; and as he who creates a thing of beauty out of a mass that is without form or comeliness, until he transforms it, finds himself warranted to discover the sentiment of beauty in the whole of things; so also the man who has discovered that that which seemingly had no interest in goodness but was possibly malignant and sought his ruin, can be turned by him into a ministrant of blessedness, finds himself warranted to go forward to the infinite task of turning a religionless universe into a mes-

senger of love. He finds the meaning of the cosmos disclosed in the conquests he has made. He has taken the seeming "dare" of nature and found that he can turn it into his true friend. He has made her speak the language of the tenderest service to personality. To him, the universe exists for the purpose of bringing into being just such personalities as he finds himself coming to be. He verily makes over the universe progressively in his own soul. His cosmos is the product of his own creative spirit.

If at this point we recall how it was pointed out in an earlier stage of our study that it is only in the communion of personalities any human person comes to his true self, our contention will be the more abundantly vindicated. For the growing community of spirit which is developing on a broad scale among the many races of mankind has been rendered possible by means of the prodigious advance recently made in those scientific discoveries which have placed the forces of material existence at the disposal of mankind for their well-being.

Hereby also is brought to light the ultimate motive of all science. The great generalizations of science turn out to be a method of transferring to objective nature the predicates descriptive of our personal nature. Science is an instrument for the affirmation of the supremacy of personality in the universe, for in the transfer of the terms which are descriptive of the inner movements of our subjectivity to the objective world there is nothing artificial, but in the act

of clothing nature, seemingly external to our personality, in the very garb of personality the truth of nature itself is discovered and set forth. Nature thus becomes instrumental to the achievements of the higher spiritual life. This is the faith upon which science reposes. Without it the motive power that carries the man of science through his prodigious labors would be lacking.

If there seems at first glance an arbitrariness attaching to this method of cosmic interpretation it disappears when full weight is given to a consideration mentioned earlier. It was pointed out that in the midst of our intensest and most spontaneous activity we are the most fully conscious of being receptive of the action of another. In human life action and passion are reciprocal and equal. In the cosmos there is that which impresses itself upon us, awakens in us the powers that we should otherwise never know to be ours and enacts its achievements anew in our souls. In making over the cosmos into our human likeness we are ourselves made over into the higher likeness which we discover there.

Here, therefore, lies the way to the answer to be given to the question of destiny. The world is ours and ever shall be increasingly. "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." "All things work together for good to them that love God."

To the Christian the universe cannot be an insoluble mystery. Mystery indeed it is, but not an

insoluble mystery. For *mystery* stands no longer for that which is ultimately unknowable but only for that which is not yet known. The attraction of the mysterious—and who has not felt its power?—lies not in its inhibition of all further search by the erection of an impenetrable barrier to all spiritual progress but in the intimation to the pioneer of thought that away "behind the ranges" there lies an unexplored region that must yet be traversed by him ere his life's task be completed. But, apart from the Christian faith, I do not see how the universe can ever have a meaning that will satisfy our deepest longing. For, though we should succeed, independently of this faith, in answering the question of the *how* or even the *whence* of this complex of things we call the world, the question of the *whereunto* must remain unanswered unless one can find the way to turn its tragedies into triumphs and all its evil into good.

This is the great bestowment of the Crucified. He has discovered to us *personality* finding its perfection ministered unto by the agonies as well as by the experiences of bliss that come to our spirits through the inseparability of our destiny from the natural constitution of the cosmos. We are making our cosmos after our inner likeness while we are being made through it. Without the sufferings it ministers to us we should lose the better part of its meaning, for we should never find our true self in it. We should never know what it is for one to rise

to the highest plane of life by learning how to give his life a ransom for many. The Christian is able to turn the universe into a cosmos ordered and beautified to be the external abode of the personalities perfected in vicariousness. He is able to find the everlasting in the present and life in the midst of death.

Some months ago when I was a guest of Professor Thorp of the United Theological College, Bangalore, Mysore, India, I picked up a little volume of meditations by an author whose name I have, unfortunately, forgotten and from it copied a short poem entitled, 'And the Life Everlasting.' With it our series of meditations, is brought to a close.

"AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING"

It will not meet us where the shadows fall
Beside the sea that bounds the Evening Land;
It will not greet us with its first clear call
When death has borne us to the farther strand.

It is not something yet to be revealed—
The Everlasting Life; 'tis here and now,
Passing unseen because our eyes are sealed
With blindness for the pride upon our brow.

It calls us 'mid the traffic of the street,
And calls in vain because our ears are lent
To those poor babblements of praise that cheat
The soul of heaven's truth with earth's content.

It dwells not in innumerable years;
  It is the breath of God in timeless things—
The strong, divine persistence that inheres
  In love's red pulses and in faith's white wings.

It is the power whereby low lives aspire
  Unto the doing of a selfless deed,
Unto the slaying of a soft desire
  In service of the high, unworldly creed.

It is the treasure that is ours to hold
  While all things else are turned to dust;
That priceless and imperishable gold
  Beyond the scathe of robber or of rust.

It is the clarion when the sun is high—
  The touch of greatness in the toil for bread—
The nameless comfort of the winter's sky—
  The healing silence where we lay our dead.

And if we feel it not among our strife,
  In all our toiling and in all our pain—
This rhythmic pulsing of immortal life—
  Then do we work and suffer here in vain.

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